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ABSTRACT

Data from the National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) provides information about critical transitions experienced by students as they leave elementary or middle school and progress through the educational system to the world of work. The Extension NELS study reported here used NELS:88 data for the base year sample of 24,599 eighth graders to identify findings with implications for nonschool programs aimed at younger teens, parenting programs, and programs for those interested in helping community institutions be more effective with younger teens. Part 1 of this report gives an overview and summary of major findings, while Part 2 lists specific findings and Part 3 provides a comparative analysis of student characteristics. Eighth graders were found to be varied in terms of demographic characteristics, but surprisingly alike overall, with similar expectations and similar degrees of involvement in extracurricular activities and community-based youth programs. Findings with regard to school and community background, parent characteristics and involvement, and ethnic and socioeconomic characteristics are summarized for program planners. Appendixes list the main variables considered and recipients of the concept reports for particular areas of interest. (SLD)

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GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH U.S. EIGHTH GRADERS: IMPLICATIONS FOR NONSCHOOL PROGRAMS

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This study is possible because the Department of Education made tapes of the data available at low cost to other researchers. Sharon Helmus assisted the authors with the word processing. Sara Steele is a Professor in the Department of Continuing and Vocational Education and a Program Development and Evaluation Specialist with Cooperative Extension. The other authors are Doctoral candidates in the Department of Continuing and Vocational Education, UW-Madison.

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PART I: OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

What do eighth graders look like in terms of demographics? School and home life? Views of the future? Perceptions of self? Participation in activities? How similar are they nationwide? To what extent do demographic differences affect school and personal life? Answers to these questions and others are available from a national study of eighth graders conducted by the Department of Education.

This section of this report does three things.

1. Introduces you to the study and the organization of the report
2. Presents a summary of major findings
3. Identifies implications

Section II and III give more detail. The middle section provides more information on how the comparative analysis was done. The last section presents the specific findings.

Data Source

The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) is the third in a series of longitudinal studies commissioned by the U.S. Department of Education National Center for Education Statistics and was conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) - A Social Science Research Center at the University of Chicago.

Purpose.

The NELS:88 study is designed to provide trend data about critical transitions experienced by students as they leave elementary or middle school and progress through high school and into college or their careers. Emphasis is placed on student learning, early and late predictors of dropping out, and school effects of students' access to programs and equal opportunity to learn. Underlying this study is a central theme that education in America must be understood as a lifelong process enmeshed in a complex social context.

The eighth grade survey is the base year (1988) of this study. These students were surveyed in 1990 when they were tenth graders and in 1992 when they were in the twelfth grade. Data from the tenth grade survey will be included in a later report. The sample will be surveyed again in 1994 and 1996.

Sample.

The NELS:88 study used a two-stage stratified probability design to select a nationally representative sample of schools and students. The first stage selected 1052 participating schools from about 39,000 eligible public and private schools with eighth grades. Some schools such as overseas military schools and those operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs were excluded from the sample. The second sampling stage produced a random selection of 24,599 eighth grade students from these schools. This sample represents the estimated 3,008,080 eighth graders who were in school in 1988. Hispanic and Asian or Pacific Islander students were oversampled to provide an adequate sample size for special analysis.

Eighth Grade Survey.

The eighth grade survey collected information about students' backgrounds, language use, perceptions of self, plans for the future, home and school life, and school and nonschool activities. The students also completed cognitive tests on math, science, reading and social studies. In addition to the student surveys, one of the parents, up to two teachers and the school administrator were surveyed.

One of the unique features of the NELS:88 study is the attention it gives to the role of parents in the educational process. The parent was asked questions about factors influencing educational attainment, participation in the school and community, family background and the character of the home educational support system.

The teachers provided information about their perceptions of the sampled students' classroom performances, personal characteristics, curriculum content and the teachers' background and activities. The administrator questionnaire examined school, teacher and student characteristics, school policies and practices, grading and testing structure, school programs and facilities, parental involvement in the school, and the school climate. All of the data is connected together to provide a comprehensive picture of eighth graders' school and home life.

The Extension NELS:88 Study

Purpose

The Extension NELS study, which began during the summer of 1991, is designed to communicate findings from the NELS data to Extension personnel and to identify implications for nonschool programs for younger teens, parenting programs, and programs for those interested in helping community institutions be more effective with younger teens.

Advisory Committee

The study is advised by a five-member committee which met in Washington D. C. in August 1991 to launch the study. The members included Karen Pittman, Academy for Educational Development; Sue Fisher, Florida Extension; Emma Lou Norland, Ohio State University; Al Beaton, Boston College; and Jeff Miller, Community Cares Project, National 4-H Council and George Mayeske, the ES/USDA Project Officer. The panel selected and prioritized the topics they thought would be of most value. In addition, a panel of 60 Extension staff members and volunteers from 20 states reviewed materials and suggested implications.

Funding

Phase I of the Extension NELS study was funded under Cooperative Agreement No. 91-EXCA-2-0135 between the Cooperative Extension Service, University of Wisconsin and Cooperative Extension, United States Department of Agriculture. Phase II, which began in 1993, was funded by the Kellogg Foundation through the Community Cares Project of the National 4-H Council and University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension. It is looking at findings from 10th grade survey. A team at Penn State, under the direction of Dr. Katherine Fennelly, also received funding from the National 4-H Council and developed a summary report which presents much of the information on the eighth graders in graph form.

Order of Activities

The first several months of the project were spent in examining single topics according to several variables recommended by the advisory committee: ethnicity, socio-economic status, family composition (natural parents or other), sex of student, urbanicity, region, and 4-H participation; and paired variables: socio-economic status within ethnic groups, urbanicity within region, and family composition according to sex of student. We dropped the last two pairs of variables and continued to work with the first seven and the pair of ethnicity and socio-economic status.

These findings which appeared to have the most relevance for nonschool programs were identified. We used range in percentages rather than statistical tests in that we were interested in the percent of youngsters with various characteristics rather than proving that significant differences exist. Futurists tell us that in the years ahead it is more important to understand and celebrate diversity than to seek generalizable uniformity.

Single Topic Reports

Eighty-nine single topic reports (2 to 4 pages) were developed which contained the following information: 1) responses for all 8th graders, 2) responses according to socio-economic status, 3) responses related to ethnicity, 4) ethnicity and socio-economic status, 5) sex of student, 6) urbanicity, 7) region, 8) family composition and 9) 4-H participation.

These reports were mailed on a weekly or biweekly basis to more than 80 Extension personnel and volunteers from 21 states. A list of the reports and of the individuals who received them is given in the appendix for those readers who might want more information on a specific topic. For example, the single concept reports give percentages for all ethnic groups, while this report usually only reports the highest and the lowest percentages.

Summary Reports

Working from the specific single topic reports, two summary reports were prepared. One brings all of the findings of the analysis related to 4-H participation together in one report called **Nationwide Participation in 4-H During the 1980's**. The other, this report, summarizes the main findings of the analysis. In developing this report we found it necessary to begin a second layer of analysis to sort out from the many items those that showed the greatest amount of difference. This time we used 10 percentage points difference. The processes used in this analysis are described in detail in the section on comparative analysis.

Suggested Aprroach for Users of This Report

Interpretation

We realize that readers are looking for general statements about areas where differences do or do not exist related to a specific aspect. For simplicity's sake, we have used such statements in this report. However, as we worked with the data, we soon found that simple statements of difference were often misleading because, regardless of the fact that differences existed among nine groups, a fairly sizeable percentage of each group held the trait that we were examining. For example, although a disproportionate percentage of Black and Hispanic eighth graders' families were in the lowest socio-economic quartile, it is important to remember that some percentage of those ethnic groups was in the highest quartile.

As we worked with the data we uncovered ways in which we thought those reporting findings from other studies and the media have done a disservice to our understanding of various groups of people because they have emphasized differences. For example, look at the following paragraphs taken from an article in the November 8, 1992, issue of the Wisconsin State Journal. If you were to read these paragraphs quickly, what impression would you carry away about the extent to which all troubled kids come from troubled homes? Would you also jump to the assumption that all kids from troubled homes are going to get into trouble?

> ". . . the State Journal found that of the 60 youth studied, 30% had fathers with drug problems, 13% had abusive fathers, and 10% had fathers with criminal records, usually involving violence.
>
> Mothers were commonly described as either depressed or unable to control their children. Twelve percent of mothers had alcohol or drug problems and 12 percent had criminal records, often related to drug use or sales. One mother was described as physically abusive.
>
> Altogether, the files indicated one-fifth of the 60 youth [currently in Dane County juvenile detention] had been physically or sexually abused by an adult, often a parent."

It is very easy for the careless reader to expand on the data and gain an impression that primarily youth from troubled families get in trouble and that most children who live in troubled homes get in trouble. Here is another way of presenting that very same data. Now what impression do you get from it?

> Among the 60 youth in juvenile detention in Dane County, 70% of their fathers and 82% of their mothers were not known to have alcohol or drug problems. Ninety percent of the fathers and 88% of the mothers did not have criminal records. More than 80% of the offenders came from homes where there was no evidence that they had been abused.

Both descriptions are true. It is also true that a disproportionate number of youth who get into trouble come from families where one or both of the parents have problems. But by emphasizing that fact, it masks the fact that youngsters whose parents do not have problems also get into trouble. It also tends to make people more suspicious of youth whose parents are known to have problems. Such suspicions may make it harder for the youth to maintain an ordinary life and to excel. We hope that as you read this report that follows that you will look both at what is said and the reverse of what is said and keep findings in proportion.

Organization of This Report

The NELS:88 study provided a wealth of information on a variety of topics. The report is even more complex because we are trying to share two kinds of information with you: 1) the "face responses" or responses to a variety of questions by the whole group of respondents 2) range in percentages when examined by key demographic variables. We have organized the report in this way.

Part I: Overview. This part introduces the study, summarizes the major finding from the total sample, and in a separate section, summarizes the comparative analysis. It concludes with some of the most important conclusions and iimplications.

Part II: Specific Findings. This part provides the detail which supports each major finding. It includes information about differences related to the variables examined when the differences in the range across subgroups is at least l0 percentage points. This section also includes comments about some implications specific to a finding.

Part III: Comparative Analysis This part summarizes the extent to which differences appeared related to the seven variables examined - ethnicity, socio-economic status, sex of student, family type, urbanicity, region, and 4-H participation. This is the section which is the base for the conclusion that eighth graders across the country are more similar than different.

Using this Report

This report is too complex to try to read from cover to cover. We suggest that you concentrate on Part I, referring to the approriate section in Part II only when you want more information. If you are especially interested in one or more of the seven variables, you may want to look at information about that variable in Part III. If you are interested in the extent of interrelatedness among pairs of variables, you find that information in the Appendix.

SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

General

- **Although eighth graders varied extensively in terms of demographic characteristics, they are surprisingly alike.** There were relatively few substantial differences in relation to region, urbanicity, and sex of student. Ethnic, social-economic and family-type examinations usually showed as much variation within a subgroup as was found between groups. (See pages 13 and 14 of the summary for more detail).

- **Eighth graders generally had high expectations for their future education and employment.**

- **Most eighth graders were involved both in extracurricular activities at school and in community based youth programs. However, the early teens showed considerable variation in the kinds of activities which attracted them.** Athletic activities attracted the highest percentages, but even in these kinds of activities, two-thirds did not take part in a school sport and about two-thirds did not take part in a community-based sports program. (See the section on life skill development activities for more detail).

- **Only 2% of the eighth graders were completely free of any of the 15 indicators which might indicate a lack of commitment to school.** (J. D. Hawkins and colleagues at the University of Washington included lack of commitment as one of their 15 indicators of risk for youth.) Only 10% showed six or more of the factors. (See the school section of this summary for more detail).

Characteristics of Homes and Families

Demographics

- **White was the predominant heritage of the eighth graders. Approximately one-fourth of them were from other heritages.** One-eighth were Black and one-tenth were Hispanic. About 4% of the eighth graders were of Asian heritage and 1% were American Indians or Alaskan Natives (called Native Americans in this report).

- **Some eighth graders from all ethnic groups were in families who used a language other than English at home.** Among those who spoke another language before they started school, almost one-fourth said they had learned English first. Almost half had learned Spanish first. From 1% to 4% spoke other languages ranging from Portuguese and Greek to Chinese.

- **There was considerable variation in socio-economic status.** Socio-economic status is a composite of family income, mother's and father's educational level, and mother's and father's occupation. There was considerable diversity among eighth graders in terms of the various components of socio-economic status.

- **There was a great range in terms of total family income.** About one-fifth of eighth grade families had an income of less than $15,000 (below poverty level). Another one-fifth were from families of incomes of $50,000 or more including 4% from families with incomes of more than $100,000.

- **There was also great diversity in terms of the amount of schooling completed by the parents.** For example, about the same percentages of the fathers/male guardians of the eighth grade students had a graduate degree, 12%, as had not completed high school, 15%. For mothers it was 8% advanced degree and 15% with less than high school completed). Over half of the eighth graders had at least one parent who had completed some schooling beyond high school.

- **Parents' occupations were spread over the ten categories included in the study.** The highest percentages in any one occupational category were women: 26% clerical sales and 22% service occupations; men: 36% craftsperson or operator and 17% professional/technical/ or business owner. Only 2% were farmers.

- **More respondents were from the Southern and North Central regions than from the Northeast and West.** The largest percentage of the eighth graders, over one-third, lived in the Southern region. One-fourth of students lived in the North Central region. Lesser numbers, about one-fifth each, were from the Northeast and Western regions.

- **The majority of schools were in suburban areas.** Among the remainder, somewhat more eighth graders went to schools in rural areas or areas outside of a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), than in urban areas (Central Cities within an MSA).

- **Mobility and changing schools was a fact of life for many youngsters.** Fewer than half of the eighth graders in the study had remained in the same school system for all eight grades.

- **The sample was made up of an almost equal percentage of boys, 49.8% and girls, 50%.**

- **Most of the adult respondents indicated a religious affiliation. Although two ethnic groups were closely tied to specific religions, there was variation within these groups.** Over half of the eighth graders' parents indicated a Protestant Christian background. The largest percentages of parents indicated a religious background of either Baptist, 24%, or Catholic, 32%.

Households

- **Family and household make-ups varied. Almost two-thirds of the eighth graders lived with both of their natural or adoptive parents.** Slightly under 65% were living with both of their original parents. More were living in a single-parent household than were living with one original parent and a stepparent. Slightly under 20% were living with only one parent (16.5% with their mother, 2.6% with their father). Slightly under 15% were living with one parent and a stepparent or other guardian (11.5% with mother and stepfather, 2.6% with father and stepmother). Three percent were living with someone other than either parent.

- **Almost a third of eighth graders had a natural or adoptive parent who lived outside their home.** Most eighth graders, 92%, said their mother lived with them (other female guardian, 5%), while fewer, 69%, said their father lived with them (other male guardian, 13%).

- **Almost all eighth graders had one or more siblings.** About one-third had three or more siblings. However, only about half of the eighth graders indicated that they had a sibling living at home.

- **Some households included adults other than parents.** Although 7% of the eighth graders said that a grandparent lived with them, 1% of the respondents were grandparents indicating that in some households the grandparent had major responsibility for the eighth grader. Seven percent also indicated that other relatives lived with them and 3% indicated that a nonrelative lived with them.

Family Risk Factors (NELS)

- **Almost half of the eighth graders held at least one family situational characteristics that some NELS authors believed to be associated with high social risk.** The fact that ethnic groups other than Whites and those from families with lower socio-economic status showed more of the risk factors is in part explained because several of the risk factors either were part of the definition of socio-economic status (family income and parents' education) or were closely tied to ethnic heritage (single-parent family, limited language proficiency).

- **The findings in relation to the individual risk factors included in the NELS parent study were as follows.**
  More than one in five eighth graders lived in single-parent homes.
  More than one in five lived in families with a total family income of less than $15,000.
  One in ten had parents, neither of whom had completed high school.
  More than one in ten were home alone more than three hours after school.
  One in ten had a sibling who dropped out of school.
  Very few, about two percent, had limited English proficiency.

After School

- **Relatively few eighth graders took part in activities at school after classes. Most went home.** Most parents, 78%, said their eighth graders went home after school. Other places that eighth graders went were organized sports, 8%; somewhat over 7% went to someone else's house, 4% friend's, 2% relative's, 1% neighbor's and less than 1% to a sitter's house; extracurricular activities, 5%; and to a job, 1%. A few, less than 1%, indicated that they didn't know where the eighth grader went.

- **Most said there was usually someone at home when they returned from school.** About a third said there was usually a younger brother or sister at home. Almost half said their mother was usually home after school. Some, 15%, indicated that their fathers were home and about a fifth said that an older brother or sister was home. Very few, 5%, indicated that an adult neighbor or sitter was present.

Home Resources

- **Many eighth graders reported that they had equipment at home needed in their studies or in nonschool educational activities.** Most students said they had access to educational equipment: calculator, 95%; VCR, 84%; typewriter, 72%; and computer 42%.

- **Most eighth graders also reported print materials in their homes.** Most had access to a dictionary, 98%; 50 or more books, 89%; encyclopedia, 79%; regular subscriptions to magazines, 75%; newspapers, 73%; and an atlas, 69%.

- **Most had their own bedroom, but fewer had a specific place to study.** Most students, about four-fifths, said they had their own bedroom. About two-fifths had a specific place to study in their home.

Eighth Graders

Age and Special Needs

- **Most eighth graders were 14 or 15 years old.** Over a third were over 14 including 6% who were 16 or older. Only 1% were 13 or younger. The majority of the adult respondents were in their late thirties or early forties.

- **Almost one of five eighth graders had some kind of learning, emotional, physical or other problem which might interfere with their school work. Most who had such problems were receiving special help.**

Future Expectations

- Eignth graders had great expectations for their futures. Most expected to complete high school and many expected to continue their education beyond high school.

- Their expectations in terms of a future career varied with the highest percentages indicating professional positions or military/police. Over half expected to enter careers requiring considerable schooling. However, less than a third expected to take college preparatory courses in high school.

Views of Self

- Most eighth graders thought they are people of worth and value. However, sometimes they lost faith in themselves and occasionally felt 'no good' or useless or had nothing of which to be proud.

- Most felt others saw them "to some extent" as being a good student, athletic, popular, and important.

- Although most eighth graders felt they had a good deal of control over their lives, some recognized that luck and chance sometimes played a part. Those with lower socio-economic status were more likely to recognize control by outside forces.

Communication

- Most parents thought they communicated with their eighth graders on a regular basis regarding school experiences and plans for the future. Most eighth graders talked with their parents at least one or more times about school activities, things studied and class, and selecting courses and programs.

- Eighth graders were more likely to talk with nonschool sources as they planned their high school program than they were with teachers and guidance counselors. They were most likely to talk frequently with their mothers and with relatives and friends their own age.

- Eighth graders were somewhat more likely to talk with an adult (other than their parents) about selecting courses and getting information about high school than they were a school counselor or teacher. They were somewhat more likely to talk with teachers about improving current academic work than with counselors or other adults.

- Eighth graders were less likely to talk to teachers and counselors about future work related topics than they were to talk with other adults.

- Regardless of characteristic, many early teens needed to talk to adult relatives and friends about things which bother or interest them.

- Eighth graders were more likely to have talked with adults other than school personnel for most specific topics. Furthermore, they were also more likely to have talked about more of the topics with other adults (parents excluded) than they were to have talked about them with counselors and teachers.

Health Risk

- Relatively few eighth graders, 7%, admitted to smoking cigarettes. A few smoked a great number of cigarettes.

School

Kind of School

- Most eighth graders attended a large public school. Most of the schools were attended by some ethnic minorities thus providing an opportunity for eighth graders to get to know students of other cultures.

Opinions About School

- Schools differed greatly in the extent to which they provided a safe climate for students. Students may also differ in what they view as a safe climate. Personal safety appears to be a concern to a number of students. In 1988, drugs for sale was a minor problem.

- Other disruptions to schoolwork came from absences, tardiness, and lack of courtesy. Tardiness and absenteeism were substantial problems in some schools. Most did not feel that physical or verbal abuse of teachers was a problem at their school.

- Although there were problems, most students thought there was a good relationship between the teachers and students at their school. Most thought there was real school spirit, rules for behavior were strict, and discipline was fair.

- Eighth graders were sensitive to how adults praised their work, didn't put them down, and listened to them. Although most felt that teachers gave them appropriate respect, about a third saw problems in how they had been treated by teachers.

School Success

- Slightly more eighth graders were in a program for gifted and talented than had been held back a grade in school. Almost one in every five eighth graders was in a program for the gifted and talented while 16% had been held back in school.

- Socio-economic status showed a clear relationship to school grades and NELS test scores.

- Some students in all ethnic groups and all SES quartiles earned very good grades and/or scored well on the NELS test, and some earned poor grades and/or scored poorly in academic subjects. However, in general, eighth graders in families with higher socio-economic status showed higher scores and better grades. Youth of Asian heritage were more likely to score higher and have a higher percentage earning top grades than were Whites and others.

- Most of the teachers of the eighth graders rated them as doing well. Very few were viewed by their teachers as being passive and withdrawn. However, the teachers said that about one-fourth of the eighth graders included in this study consistently worked below their ability and one-fifth were rated as inattentive.

School Risk Indicators

- There was neither a majority of students free from risk nor a majority seriously at risk in relation to school. Only 2% of all eighth graders showed none of 15 factors selected as being indicative of poor school adjustment. On the other hand, only 8% showed half or more of the indicators. The average student (median) showed between three and four of these risk factors.

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Orientation to Basic Subjects

- **Many eighth graders failed to see how some of the basic courses will be useful to them in the future.** They were most likely to view English and Math as useful and least likely to see the relevance of Social Studies.

- **Many youngsters said they did not usually look forward to going to their classes.** Boys, White youth, and suburban youth were most likely to say they usually did not look forward to going to class.

- **Most eighth graders were not afraid to ask questions in class.** However, there is a fairly sizeable portion who were afraid to ask questions in at least one class.

- **It would appear that most eighth graders felt bored at least occasionally at school.** Many say they are bored half or more of the time they were in school.

School Behavior

- **Behaving in school was a problem for some youngsters of this age but not for others.** Fewer than 10% of the eighth graders seemed to have chronic behavior problems as defined by being in trouble three or more times during the semester.

- **A sizeable percentage of eighth graders appeared unwilling or unable to invest much of themselves in their school work through homework, outside reading, or working to earn good grades.**

- **Many eighth graders tended to miss school or be tardy.** Fewer than half had perfect attendance for the month. Almost one in ten, 7%, had missed more than an average of one day a week.

Life Skill Development Activities

Our study was especially interested in the extent to which eighth graders made use of a variety of sources and activities which help build a variety of life skills.

School Courses

- **With greater emphasis on basic subjects and budget limitations, fewer students took enriching courses as part of their eighth grade school program.** The percent of students taking such courses ranged from 4% taking agriculture to 80% taking physical education at least once a week. Fewer than half of the eighth graders took music, art, computer, shop, home economics or similar courses at least once a week. The percent of schools requiring students to take selected courses ranged from family life/sex education, 47%, to physical education, 94%.

Nonschool Classes

- **Many eighth graders took religious classes outside of school. Fewer took other lessons and classes.** Many teens may not be able to afford lessons which would further their talents and interests. Although almost two-thirds of eighth graders took part in one or more nonschool classes, only about a fourth were taking classes or lessons other than religious classes. Fewer than one-fifth took part in more than two classes or lessons.

School Extracurricular

- **Schools varied in the kinds of extracurricular opportunities open to eighth graders.** Almost all schools (92%) offered athletic activities. Most schools, 83%, offered one or more musical activities. Many schools offered one or more communication type activities. Over half, 55%, had an eighth grade yearbook and in almost half of the schools eighth graders could work on a school newspaper. However, only about a fourth of the eighth grades had a speech or debate team and only one in five

had a drama club. The percent of schools offering various clubs to eighth graders ranged from 8% with history clubs to 34% with computer clubs. About two-thirds had science fairs open to eighth graders. About two-thirds of the schools have a student council and slightly more than two-fifths have an academic honor society.

- **Most eighth graders participated in at least one extracurricular activity at school.** About 88% of eighth graders participated in one or more school extracurricular activities. Thirty-five percent participated in four or more.

- **However, other than athletics and music, relatively few eighth graders were taking part in specific activities such as those which helped develop communication, clubs which provided expanded learning opportunities related to specific subjects, and/or leadership skills.** The school activities that youth were most likely to take part in were as follows: varsity sports, 48%; intramural sports; 43%, science fair, 28%; chorus/choir, 24%; band, 23%; and student year book, 15%.

Nonschool Activities

- **One in five eighth graders did not take part in any community-based activity.** The majority, 60%, reported participating in one or two activities, and 20% said they participated in four or more community programs.

- **Low percentages of eighth graders took part in three national programs which combine learning and social activities, Scouts, Boys or Girls Clubs, and 4-H. Substantially more had taken part in Scouts and 4-H before they were in the eighth grade.** Relatively few eighth graders took part in any of the three programs. The largest enrollment was found in Scouts, 14%. Lower participation rates were found for Boys and Girls Clubs, 11%, and 4-H, 9%. Considerably more of the respondents had taken part in Scouts, 38%, and 4-H, 14%, before the eighth grade than had continued into the eighth grade. On the other hand, fewer, 9%, had taken part in Boys and Girls Clubs before the eighth grade.

- **Fewer than half took part in any one specific nonschool program offered in their communities.** The most popular nonschool programs were sports teams, 37%, and religious groups, 34%. A few more eighth graders took part in summer programs, 19%; hobby clubs, 16%; YMCA/YWCA, 15%; and neighborhood groups, 13%, than took part in Scouts, 4-H, or Boys and Girls Clubs.

General Participation

- **Only 10% held an office in a nonschool group. Slightly more, 14%, were serving as an officer or team leader in extracurricular activities.**

- **Of all of the various content areas, athletic activity appeared to be especially appealing to this age group.** Religious activities were next most frequently mentioned.

- **Slightly over one eighth grader in 20 was not taking part in any youth activity either at school or in the community.**

Community Resources

- **Most eighth graders made some use of community resources such as libraries, museums, and concerts or musical events. They were slightly more likely to have used such institutions than were their parents.** Most eighth graders, 89%, used at least one community resource: libraries, museums, and concerts or musical events. Over half had made use of three or more. The percent who had used a specific resource ranged from 40% visiting art museums to 82% using the public library. They were slightly more likely to have used such institutions than were their parents.

Reading and Viewing

- **Considerable knowledge can be gained from reading and television. The eighth graders were much more likely to watch television than they were to do a lot of leisure reading.** About 80% of eighth graders did some reading outside of school, but few, 10%, read extensively (more than three hours per week). Almost all eighth graders, 96%, watched television. Somewhat less than half, 45%, watched from 1 to 3 hours of television on weekdays.

Work for Pay

- **By the time boys and girls reach the eighth grade, most want to earn some money of their own. Many work at least a few hours a week.** About two-thirds earned money. Although a third worked four or fewer hours a week, 14% worked more than ten hours a week.

Parental Involvement

Parent Guidance

- **Most parents said they had rules their eighth grader was expected to follow . This was true regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic status, family composition and sex.**
- **However, according to eighth graders, parents did not always monitor to see that the rules were being followed**
- **Many parents helped their eighth graders with homework.** Somewhat less than three-fourths said they helped their eighth grader with homework at least once or twice a month.
- **Most students thought their parents trusted them and few thought they abdicated their decision-making responsibilities to their parents.**
- **Most parents said they knew the parents of their children's friends. Fewer, however, were in nonschool organizations with parents of other eighth graders.**

Parent Participation

- **Some parents took an active part in school activities. Many did not.** Socio-economic status appeared to make a substantial difference in terms of whether parents attended school events and visited eighth grade classes.
- **Parents were even less likely to take part in PTO or other volunteer activities than to attend events and classes.** Again socio-economic status and place of residence made some difference, but participation was only moderate among the groups most likely to take part in activities for parents.
- **One reason why few parents volunteered may have been because the school did not ask them to volunteer and they did not contact the school offering their services.** Schools were about twice as likely to contact parents about fund raising as about volunteering time and effort.
- **Some parents from all demographic groups contacted the school but that number was fewer than half.**

Similarities and Differences According to Selected Characteristics

A total of 439 comparisons were made among subgroups of eighth graders for each of the following variables: ethnicity, socio-economic status, family type, sex of student, urbanicity, region, and 4-H participation.

General

- Eighth graders across the country are more similar than different when six major variables and 4-H participation were examined. About three-fourths of the comparisons showed ranges of less than 10 percentage points. Less than 2% of the comparisons yielded differences across ranges of 30 or more percentage points.

- The largest differences appeared in relation to family and home characteristics rather than in relation to performance or views (participation, school success, views of self or similar areas).

- Demographics and use of community resources were affected by the greatest number of variables. About 50% of all comparisons yielded differences of 10 or more percentage points.

- No substantial differences (10 percentage points or more) appeared related to the following items: where the youngster went after school and who was home after school, learning and health problems, future occupation other than professional and military/police, supplementary courses taken at school, non-school courses, school extracurricular activities, some of the positive opinions about school, parental rules and monitoring, and parent participation in PTO activities.

- In addition, smoking, general participation, working for pay, future expectations, views of self, supplementary school courses, and who was home after school were least affected by the seven variables examined. Fewer than 15% of the total comparisons for all seven variables showed differences of 10 percentage points or more.

Characteristics Which Were Least and Most Likely to Affect Responses

- Where an eighth grader lived either in terms of region or degree of urbanicity seemed to make little difference in the responses. Only 7% of the region and 8% of the urbanicity comparisons showed differences of 10 or more percentage points.

- Demographic characteristics such as ethnicity, socio-economic status and religion showed the highest percent of substantial differences related to urbanicity, 57%, and region, 60%. Using community resources showed the next greatest percent of urbanicity comparisons yielding differences of 10 or more percentage points, but only 43% of those comparisons showed this kind of difference. Parent participation showed the most substantial differences related to region at 36%.

- In most instances little difference appeared between boys and girls. Only 9% of the 439 comparisons showed differences of 10 or more percentage points. The greatest number of differences appeared in relation to the following areas: school behavior (boys were more likely to show school behavior problems than were girls); and self-concept (more boys had higher self-concepts than did girls).

- Slightly less than a third, 31%, of the comparisons made in relation to family type showed differences of 10 percentage points or more. Differences in relation to family type most often occurred between those eighth graders living with both parents and those who lived with someone other than their parents. Usually those living with one parent whether in a single parent family or in a family which also contained a step-parent were very similar and between those who were with both natural parents and those who lived with someone other than their parents. The most differences were found in relation to the items that dealt with communication and behavior problems. The information on family type clearly demonstrated the great complexity that currently exists in youngsters' home situations and the potential traumatic affect that a disruption in a family may have for the youngsters involved.

- Somewhat more than a third, 36%, of the comparisons made in relation to participation in 4-H showed differences of 10 or more percentage points. Those who had joined 4-H in the eighth grade were more likely to say they were in other nonschool and school activities and to generally participate more than others did. Those who had joined 4-H in the eighth grade also showed the highest percentage in the lowest quartile on the NELS tests.

- Socio-economic status showed several substantial differences. Over a third, 38%, of the 439 comparisons showed differences of 10 percentage points or more. Over three-fourths of the socio-economic comparisons made related to the following showed differences of at least 10 percentage points: parent participation, use of community resources, homes, family risk factors, and school success.

- The greatest number of differences appeared related to ethnicity. Over half, 51%, of the comparisons yielded differences of 10 percentage points or more. The areas where half or more of the comparisons showed a difference of 10 percentage points or more were as follows: age, homes, communication, schools, school behavior, school success, school risk, nonschool activities, community resources, and parent participation.

- There was some evidence of fairly pervasive cultural difference related to ethnic heritage. A larger proportion of families of Asian heritage appear to place more importance on more education and better grades in school than was found with other ethnic groups. More Black youth showed evidence of gregariousness (more likely to communicate with other people, more likely to take part in nonschool youth programs and school extracurricular programs) than did those of other heritages. It is likely that this extreme sociableness may not fit as well in typical school situations because a higher percentage of Black youth were in difficulty as a result of school behavior than was found for other youth. White youth showed considerable diversity among themselves including 3% from homes which used a language other than English.

- Although there were more differences of 10 or more percentage points related to ethnicity, when the numbers showing differences of 30 or more percentage points were compared, 31 appeared related to socio-econonic status and 26 for ethnicity. The large number of students in the NELS:88 study permitted us to run the combination of ethnicity and socio-economic status. In some instances, differences related to socio-economic status held regardless of ethnic heritage. In other instances, the differences were primarily related to ethnicity. In still others, both ethnicity and socio-economic status yielded differences. The work on this paired variable is not summarized in Part II, but some of the specific findings are included.

There was a fairly strong relationship between ethnicity and socio-economic status. Families with ethnic heritages other than White were more likely to be in the lowest socio-economic quartile and less likely to be in the highest quartile.

Effect on Areas of Special Interest

- **School Success and Amount of Risk.** Ethnicity yielded the most differences in relation to school success and amount of risk. Youngsters of Asian heritage usually showed the highest percentage of success and those of Native American heritage showed the lowest percentages. White youngsters often had the highest percentage of risky attitudes toward school and Black youngsters often showed the lowest percentages. Socio-economic status yielded almost as many differences, 79%, as ethnicity, 86%, in relation to school success.

- **Participation in Youth Activities.** Other than ethnicity and 4-H participation, most variables seemed to have little relationship as to whether or not an eighth grader took part in school extracurricular activities or in nonschool activities. Ethnicity appeared to be a factor related to nonschool, but not related to school activities. Boys and girls were about equally likely to take part in activities. However, some differences related to school sports still appeared. Family type did not seem to have much effect on participation in activities.

- **Views of Self and Expectations of the Future.** Ethnicity and socio-economic status appeared to affect how some students viewed themselves and their future.

  Asian youngsters were most likely and Native Americans were least likely to view themselves as taking college preparatory courses in high school and completing college. Black youngsters were most likely to show the highest self-confidence responses. White youngsters were least likely and Hispanic youngsters were most likely to feel they were controlled by external forces.

  Youngsters from the lowest socio-economic quartile were least likely to be certain that they would complete high school and college. They were most likely to show evidence of being externally controlled and to have lower self-concept scores.

- **Communication.** Ethnic heritage appeared to have more effect on communication patterns than did socio-economic status. Black youngsters were most likely to say they communicated with a variety of people about a variety of topics. White youngsters were least likely to talk to a school counselor, teacher or other adult about a variety of topics.

- **Parent Guidance.** Whether or not parents checked that homework was completed did not vary substantially with the variables we examined. Monitoring with whom their child went out only showed a difference in relation to family type. Monitoring TV use showed differences of 10 percentage points or more for both ethnicity and family type.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

After sifting through the many useful findings and the implications sketched in the next section, the study team feels the following conclusions are most useful to those working with nonschool programs, parenting education, or community development programs.

Recognition and Respect For Diversity

- Although a protective teen culture often appears to mask differences, there is considerable diversity among eighth graders. That diversity is complex and not easily recognized. Eighth graders do differ on obvious characteristics like ethnicity, place of residence, socio-economic status, sex of student, or family composition. However, there is also considerable variation within each socially or economically defined category.

Examples:

- -- Even though in general Asian youngsters were more likely to earn higher grades, some Asian youngsters had low grades and some White, Black, Hispanic and Native American youth earned straight A averages.

- -- Cultural differences exist between families who trace their ethnic heritage to Puerto Rico, to Mexico, or to Spain. Similarily, new immigrants from Cambodia have a different ethnic background than fourth generation Americans of Japanese or Chinese heritage. Black skinned youth who trace their heritage to islands in the Caribbean have a different background than those whose ancestors came directly from Africa.

- -- Although a much higher percentage of youth from ethnic heritages other than White were from families with low incomes, some from each ethnic group were from families in the top socio-economic quartile. And, although the percentage of White youth in the lowest socio-economic quartile was less than for other ethnic backgrounds, because of the large number of White families, the largest number of low-income eighth graders are White.

- o Socio-economic status impacts teens and affects grades and views of self. Status is hard to recognize because it is often not visible. It is not made up of any one factor but a combination of income, parent's education level, and parent's occupation. Limits imposed by family income and limits imposed by parents' backgrounds can affect different aspects of eighth graders' lives.

  - -- Programs for lower socio-economic youth should build enthusiasm and support for successful learning experiences in school as well as outside the school.

  - -- Those working with youth and families should avoid the trap of exclusively associating problems with lower socio-economic status. There is evidence that youngsters of the highest socio-economic quartile can be at risk both in terms of success in school and in relation to social behavior.

- o Physical and emotional problems are less visible dimensions of diversity, but they can make a youngster feel different and pose special problems. Those working with nonschool and parenting programs need to be alert to the signs of learning, emotional, and physical problems and must be able to recognize when a program participant is likely to be in difficulty.

- o Farm youngsters are a definite minority in America today. Although the NELS data show that place of residence has little effect, some suburbanites have a negative stereotype of the ability of rural youngsters. Others have a negative stereotype of ability of inner city youngsters.

- o The strength of the family must be acknowledged and used to achieve positive learning experiences. Otherwise, a very important resource for learning and motivation may be overlooked. It is important to define the term "family" in a way that is relevant to the people involved. It is also important to foster understanding and acceptance of diversity among family types

- o There is also tremendous diversity in the life experiences of those in any subgroup and diversity in how youth with the same characteristics identify and deal with those life situations. For example, some low income youth come from families that put high priority on education, while others do not.

- Acceptance of diversity should influence every aspect of educational programs including the way plans are formulated, the way needs are identified and judgements made about those who are economically, socially, and physically different from one another. There is sufficient complexity in the diversity today that we should think in terms of diversity as the norm rather than continuing to think of a majority and of minorities.

  It is important that we:

  -- examine, challenge, and assess the extent to which our personal beliefs encompass stereotypes or cultural biases. It is difficult to begin any planning process for change without acknowledging and eliminating personal biases;

  -- help youngsters and adults value and respect the individual differences rather than forcing a uniform view of life; and
  -- understand and treat each youngster and family as individuals, recognizing the potential of individual youngsters and individual parents. Multiple approaches and indicators should be used to develop and evaluate programs in school or outside the school.

  Adults who are making program decisions need to get inside a specific cultural community and have parents participate in making decisions about needs, approaches and audience.

- Yet, even with all of the surface diversity in characteristics of eighth graders, this study found that in many things such as self-concept and plans for their future, eighth graders were very similar in their responses. Thus in addition to recognizing uniqueness and diversity, we must remember that there is a good deal of similarity in how eighth graders look at themselves and their lives.

Stengthening Families

- There is considerable range in the type and amount of supervision and support given by parents regardless of family types. It was apparent that it was not the family type that made the difference but the quality of the time spent with youngsters by the adults. Some families with both natural or adoptive parents present are dysfunctional or give low priority to their children. Some single parent families and some families where the eighth grader is with an adult other than either parent provide the young person with high-quality time and guidance. Communities should be very careful not to generalize disadvantages to a specific family type like a single-parent family, but should treat each situation as unique. Those working with nonschool programs and with parenting programs can help society at large to better understand and relate to the very diverse family compositions that are result from the high divorce rate as well as temporary liaisons.

- The NELS findings indicate major gaps in interaction between parents and schools. Such gaps exist regardless of socio-economic status, ethnicity, or family type. A relatively small percentage of parents are actively involved with the school their eighth graders attend. Participation of parents in school is crucial in increasing and sustaining youngsters in learning activities.

- Those working with parent education, community development, and nonschool youth programs should do everything they can to help parents and teachers of various backgounds be comfortable in working together as a team to be sure that each youngster succeeds. Nontraditional community-based programs can be effective in increasing parents' involvement in school and nonschool activities. Such programs need to be developed in conjunction with other community programs and school in order to maximize the use of resources and facilities.

- As school districts have become larger and some parents' situations have become more chaotic, parents and teachers are less likely to work together as a team to further individual children's education. Those working with parenting programs need to help parents develop the understanding and assertiveness necessary for parents of all backgrounds to become directly involved in improving educational opportunities within school systems.

- Some parent's own experiences with school were limited or negative. School personnel and parent education programs need to be creative in developing programs which help parents who have poor or limited educational experiences to increase their own understanding so that they can discuss what is learned in school with their children. In some families, parents feel powerless in relation to encouraging homework and reinforcing the content of what is taught in school because they lack sufficient education.

- Because of disappointing experiences with some parents, some school systems and some teachers may have given up on parents. In some instances, schools and teachers may need to be helped to be more open to participation by parents and the community.

Teens Views of Themselves

- Most younger teens are optimistic about their futures. However, there was evidence that many eighth graders might not understand ways of getting to those goals and the importance of investing their time and energy in ways of achieving those goals. Adults need to help youngsters realize that futures have to be earned. There needs to be more emphasis on investing time and energy in homework, reading beyond that needed at school, engaging in outside activities which build skills, and participating in work activities.

- Most younger teens feel good about themselves. It is a challenge for adults to help youngsters be realistic, maintain positive self-esteem, make plans, and make the investments of their own time and energy necessary to carry our those plans. Adults need to be sensitive to the feelings of younger teens and help them foster feelings of confidence and self worth.

Supplementary Educational Programs

- Most eighth graders participate in at least one youth activity either at school or in the community or both. Adults in charge of nonschool programs must recognize that there is no vast pool of youth who are not taking part in school or community programs. Those developing nonschool programs for junior high youngsters should study what is available at school and in other community programs and be aware of which youngsters are being attracted to the activities. Then they should focus on providing the opportunities which are least available in the community.

- Adults must also realize that younger teens have diverse interests. Trying out various interests is a part of growing up. Changing interests is a much greater factor than differences related to ethnicity. Youth programs must be flexible and creative enough to keep pace with changing interests rather than expecting youth of this age to settle in and do the same thing for months.

- Low participation by a particular ethnic group is more likely to rest with the attitudes of the adults who are recruiting participants or with a culture which has grown up about the program than to a lack of interest by the cultural group. For example, although some White leaders of programs feel that African American youngsters are not interested in their programs, this study found that youngsters of African American heritage were somewhat more likely to take part in community organized activities such as Scouts and 4-H than were others.

- Younger teens differ in the kinds of structures of activities they prefer. A small percentage of early teens find "club" kinds of structures attractive. There is a good deal of similarity in the characteristics of those who take part in Scouts and in 4-H. Those who take part in either of those programs are more likely to also take part in clubs at school than are other youngsters. However, many more younger teens are looking for activities which permit them to interact with others in a program with moderate supervison but not a formal format, a program where they can control much of the action. This may be difficult to accept for those adults who have not lived with an adolescent. They may find it risky to be in charge of a program which provides support but not control.

- Many early teens, both girls and boys, are attracted to athletic activities. That may be because of the enjoyment of the activity, the need to expend energy and build motor skills, the image projected by the emphasis on television, or parents' desires to see their children become a star athletes. Fortunately, there is a wide range of athletic activities available to most youth today ranging from very individual activities like skating and cross country to team sports. As a result, most girls as well as boys can find some athletic activity they enjoy and at which they can excel.

  However, some youngsters cannot afford the costs of some sports. Both the percent taking part in nonschool team sports and the percent taking lessons increased as socio-economic status increased. Those working with athtletics whether in school or in community programs need to be sure an adequate range of individual and team sports are available to all youngsters regardless of family income.

  In addition to helping youngsters use sports for enjoyment, relaxation, and as a means of developing coordination and other skills, it is important for those offering sports programs to use them as a vehicle for helping youth develop social skills such as cooperation and leadership.

  With the current emphasis in professional athletics on the use of physics, math, and psychology to improve performance, adults working with younger teens can also use training for a sport as a vehicle for demonstrating the use of various school courses.

- A higher percentage of eighth graders take part in school activities than in community-provided activities. However, schools differ in the kinds of activities that they offer to eighth graders. Some, for example, offer several music activities - band, chorus, orchestra - but no communication activities - school newspaper, debate, forensics. It is important that those working with nonschool programs be aware of what the school offers and whether there is "space" in such activities for all of the youngsters who want to take part.

- School systems vary in the extent to which they are currently able to offer "supplementary" courses that provide opportunities for youngsters to develop life skills beyond the basic skills available in junior high. Some families can afford to pay for private lessons in enrichment areas- art, music, language, using the computer, education for work, education for family living, or history of one's own culture. Others cannot. Nonschool programs should be very aware of those areas which are not readily available at little or no charge to all youngsters in their community and see, if and how, nonschool programs can supplement and expand the opportunities available.

- Extensive viewing of television by younger teens is a fact of life which it is difficult to change. The findings of this study indicate that many youngsters have changed their supplementary intake of

information from the one-dimensional approach of reading to the multi-dimensional approach provided by television. This finding offers diverse implications.

- -- Nonschool programs will need to use video tapes as a means of providing information and assistance. Often junior high students can do their own videotaping of activities where viewing their own performance becomes a part of learning to improve performance. Those working with nonschool educational programs need to be adept in finding, selecting, and using appropriate video tapes covering the material which previously they asked youngsters to read. Adults need to stay up to date on the kinds of media being used in schools and to encourage local libraries to provide a vehicle through which nonschool programs can make mediated materials available to youngsters. The challenge will be expanded even more with the emergence of hypermedia.

- -- National youth programs will find themselves putting more of their budgets into making and reproducing video tapes and developing other forms of instruction using technology. Many of the projects and activities stressed in Scouts and 4-H lend themselves to video presentation. Videos help people "see" and understand manual and social skills and processes better than actual demonstrations because the video can be stopped and a particular frame discussed. The video camera can get closer to the process and can record it from various perspectives. A demonstration moves so rapidly that the finer aspects often aren't caught.

- -- The use of learning videos in local clubs or den meetings increases the standard of teaching. Thousands of local volunteers try to attend training meetings and take the various skills and processes back to their members, but the quality in local communities varies with the time, understanding, and skill of the volunteer. However, the use of videos will not eliminate the need for a volunteer or a parent to work with the youngster as he or she attempts to build his or her own skill. Supervised practice is essential.

- -- Concern about what youngsters are watching on commerical television often receives more attention than does the fact that today's youngsters are used to learning through combined sight and sound, and combined direct and subliminal messages. Although some youngsters need more social contact and more physical activity, watching television in itself may be less of a problem than what is available for youngsters to watch. Situation comedies and dramas teach a great deal about life and culture if they are well written. However, some appear to glorify aspects of life that can lead youngsters into poor behavior. Perhaps rather than spending time bemoaning the fact that teens watch television, parents and communities should look for possible solutions. They could put pressure on advertisers to support programs which provide positive views of culture, thereby shaping ethical and moral values.

- -- Although both commercial television and educational videos produced for national youth programs are valuable in helping youngsters learn, adults in our society still have to do a great deal of reading and interpreting of print in order to be successful in their lives. The fact that television has replaced leisure reading for many youth makes it even more of a challenge to parents, teachers, and nonschool youth program leaders to find ways of using reading effectively so that youngsters are helped to build adequate skill.

- o Adults in addition to parents and school personnel play an important role in younger teens' lives. Nonschool activity coordinators can become trusted confidants who are willing to listen to younger teens and ask the kinds of questions which help them think through decisions.

Improving School Performance

- Whether it is real or a protective covering, many youngsters say they are bored in class, many say they do not look forward to attending class, and some say they cannot see the relevance of basic courses. Community people who are willing to work with teachers can do a good deal to improve students' orientation to classes. This can be accomplished by providing real instructional materials and situations, they themselves entering the classroom to share knowledge and do demonstrations, and otherwise supporting and working with teachers to bring teaching to life.

- There was considerable range in scores on the tests given as part of the NELS study. That range in test scores should elicit concern. The day of separate tracks with less demanding communication, science, and mathmatics skills for some students should be long gone. The jobs which could assimilate adults with poor skills have almost disappeared. For example, a course of study which a few years ago was a vocational track in high school, now has become a technical course preparing students for fields where workers need fluency in communication and skill in mathematics. Communities need to monitor their schools to see that the educational program is so well-developed and carried out that all youngsters graduate with a high degree of skill in basic areas.

- Concerns about safety at school were not specific to region or to urban or ruralness of the school. It is apparent that it is important for parents, school personnel, and the community to work together in maintaining safe schools.

Communication

- Contrary to what some parents may think, many younger teens do talk to their parents both about school and about other things that are important to them. However, it is likely that many teens prefer to take the initiative to talk, set the time, place, and pace of the discussion, and withdraw when parents question or appear to be pushing them. Youngsters and parents perception of good communication may differ. As a result programs for both teens and parents which help them explore each other's views about what constitutes good or even adequate communication may be useful.

- Youth need adults in addition to parents in their lives. They need people willing to spend time exposing them to opportunities and giving them the kind of attention and encouragement that builds their self-confidence. Mentor programs may connect youngsters between school and the work world.

Other Factors

- The push for boys and girls to receive equal encouragement in athletics and in school subjects such as math and science appears to be paying off. In 1988, there were few instances of sex differences in the areas examined in this study. However, a somewhat higher percentage of boys than girls seemed to show behavior problems, perhaps because they are expected to or perhaps because various classes and activities are not designed to interest and challenge boys. Those working with youth should be aware of these possiblities.

- Differences within communities are much more likely than are differences across communities. Most differences related to region or urbanicity were slight. National programs should give more attention to designs which accommodate diversity within a specific location rather than to designing programs specific to different geographic locations. For example, rather than thinking that rural and urban programs, or Northern and Southern programs need special characteristics, more attention needs to be given to considering how programs within a community can be equally successful with low and high income youth.

- Mobility is a fact of life for many families. Changing schools and communities can be unsettling because each move means new adjustments. Those working with nonschool programs can play an important part in easing the transition by helping a young person learn strategies for making such adjustments. These strategies often are helpful later as an adult. Nonschool programs must be flexible to allow for the flow of students coming and going within any given program period.

Several more implications are included in the next section.

In Summary

The major recommendations of this study are as follows.

1. Respect and understand the diversity of the population with which you are working. Know how this diversity applies to and affects your program.

2. A geographic community is often made up of several social communities. Develop a knowledge of the communities you are working in to enhance the acceptance and quality of programs. Study community attitudes, values, norms, and traditions. Changing is usually a long-term process.

3. Help youth and parents to accept diversity in their own community and in their state, nation and world in preparation for when they go beyond their community.

4. Use every opportunity and means to break stereotypes and myths. No one group, be it ethnic, socio-economic, family type or gender is completely the same. Each shows a considerable range of attitudes, behaviors, and other characteristics.

5. Know what the schools and other agencies in your community are not doing; decide how your programs can support or supplement life skill development activities they provide.

6. Regardless of how busy and stressed you are, remember that you are important as an "other" person in a youth or parent's life. You can be there to recognize individual uniqueness, provide a connection, and play an important part in his or her life.

PART II: SPECIFIC FINDINGS

How similar were eighth graders in their views of themselves, their schools, and their futures? Which characteristics (variables) seemed to make the most difference? In this section specific findings from the comparative analysis (described in Part III) have been included with the overall findings. Brief implications are sketched. As you read this section, remember the following.

1. The NELS study included information in many areas. It appeared to be a combining of seven or eight different studies into one data base.

2. We examined responses according to seven characteristics which we call **variables** throughout this report: **ethnicity, socio-economic status, type of family, sex of student, region, urbanicity, and participation in 4-H**. Information about six of these variables is included in the characteristics of home and family section. Findings related to 4-H participation are included in the tables, but seldom mentioned in the text. 4-H participation was included because the funding came as a result of an earlier national committee interested in examining the impact of 4-H nationwide. There is a separate report related to 4-H.

3. We explored similarities and differences based upon the percentage point differences in the range from the subgroup with the lowest to the subgroup with the highest percentage. A difference of 10 or more percentage points in the range was considered a **substantial difference**. The tables in this section show PPD **(Percentage Point Difference)** of 10 or more points.

4. Our use of a minimum ten percentage point difference was arbitrary. We chose ten percentage points for two reasons. First, there were relatively few differences of 20 or more percentage points, so 20 would have been too high. Second, most differences of less than ten did not seem to be very important when compared with the overall percentage. For example, a difference between 15% and 23% or between 70% and 76% did not seem to be especially important in that the main finding was that both ends of the range were relatively low or relatively high. We realize that working with three million students, a 1% difference in some people's eyes would be sizeable. However, most readers cannot deal with that amount of detail.

5. The interrelationship of seven variables is presented in the Appendix. Therefore you will not find PPD's given where the main study variables are described. Percentage point differences were usually much greater in relation to the interelation of the seven key variables than the effect found of one of the seven on some other part of the data.

6. A variable which did not produce substantial differences will be mentioned in the narrative only if the absence of difference seems to have special implications. For example, region and urbanicity seldom show differences of 10 percentage points. Rather than repeatedly saying that they do not show substantial differences related to the specific topic, we often will not mention them in the text.

7. Similarities are fully as important as differences. As we finish this report, it is very clear that although there are differences related to some of the variables, the basic similarities which override the effect of variables are as important as the differences. In other words even though a PPD of 10 or more points is present, if all of the subgroups show very high responses, for example all show percentages from 60% to 80%, the range is less important than the fact that all showed high percentatges. Or if all showed low percentages such as between 10% and 25%, a range of 10 percentage points across groups is probably less important than the similarity of all showing low percentages.

8. It is tempting to make sweeping generalizations when there are substantial differences. For example, it is very easy to say "Boys were more likely than girls," or "Blacks were more likely than Whites." Such statements would be true when the percentage point difference is large. However, even though technically true, such statements can be misleading. We have sometimes made such statements to start a section when the reader can check the importance of the difference from the data that follows. However, readers are cautioned about quoting the lead sentences without giving sufficient detail so that others can check the relevance of the statement.

9. We started work on the document when Black, and Hispanic were the more frequently used terms. We now realize that some prefer to be called African Americans and some prefer to be called Latinos. However, we decided not to go back and try to change language throughout. We also chose to capitalize Black and White to make them stand out as much as Asian, Hispanic, and Native American.

10. The NELS:88 team uses mother and male guardian and father and female guardian in their report. For simplicity sake, we use stepparent, although in some cases, the other adult may not legally be a stepparent.

11. The individual concept papers included information on findings when ethnicity and socio-economic status were examined together. Some of the findings from those analyses are included in this section; tables giving supporting data are not included.

12. The implications that are sketched in this part of the report are only "pump primers," ideas to start you thinking about other implications that might be triggered by the findings. We had neither time nor space to cover the many implications for each finding. You will make more from the data if you share pieces of it with thinking colleagues and listen to the different ideas that they generate.

13. **Finally, treat this section as a reference to be explored in bits and pieces as your interest takes you into various areas.** The NELS:88 survey had such a wealth of information that this section is too condensed to be read straight through.

This section is divided as follows. You may want to refer to the table of contents to get an overview of the several specific areas within each of the divisions.

CHARACTERISTICS

EIGHTH GRADERS

SCHOOL

LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMES AND FAMILIES

DEMOGRAPHICS

This section includes five of the seven main variables. Family type is included in Household and 4-H participation is included in Nonschool Activities. We also include other language, mobility (frequency of changing schools), and religion in this demographic cluster.

Ethnicity – Over one-fourth of the eighth graders were of heritages other than White.

One-eighth were black and one-tenth were Hispanic. About 4% of eighth graders were of Asian heritage and 1% were American Indians or Alaskan Natives (called Native Americans in this report). However, the extensiveness of diversity is even more dramatic as one looks within the Hispanic and Asian categories.

The heritages of the 10% of the eighth graders who were Hispanic were as follows: 6% were Mexican, Mexican-American or Chicano; 1% were Puerto Rican; less than 1% were Cuban; and slightly more than 2% were other Hispanic groups. The heritages of the 4% who were of Asian or Pacific Islander descent were as follows: Chinese, 0.6%; Filipino, 0.7%; Korean, 0.4% and Southeast Asian (Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian, Thai), 0.4%; Pacific Islander (Samoan, Guamaian, etc.), South Asian (Asian, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, etc.), 0.3%; other Asian, 0.3%; Japanaese, 0.2%; Middle Eastern, 0.2%; West Asian, 0.1%.

Although there were somewhat higher concentrations of some ethnic groups in some regions and there was some difference related to urbanicity, ethnic diversity is fairly extensive across all the United States. (See the Appendix for details).

Implications
Because various ethnic groups are dispersed across the United States, population in most communities is diverse. Those working with youth and adult educational programs need to be especially alert to bringing in people of different cultural backgrounds when the percentage with those backgrounds in a community's population is quite low.

Other Language – Some eighth graders from all ethnic groups were in families who used a language other than English at home.

Although the majority were Spanish speaking, somewhat more than one eighth grader in ten, 13%, said they spoke a language other than English before they started school. Among those who spoke another language before they started school, almost one-fourth said they had learned English first. Almost half had learned Spanish first. The other fourth involved a mixture of languages originating in Asia or Europe. Other languages spoken ranged from Portuguese and Greek, 1%, to Chinese, 4%. (Relation to key variables is covered in the Family Risk section - minority language.)

Implications
In an era of global village where communication and interaction across countries is so great, the youngster who can remain fluent in two or more languages has an added gift. The United States is one of the few countries where being fluent in languages other than English has not been emphasized. Those who came to this country 50 to 100 years ago tried to lose their native language. Today maintaining two or more languages is an added asset to a youngster if it does not interfere with the skill with which they can handle assignments and conversations held in English.

Socio-economic Status – There was considerable variation in socio-economic status.

Socio-economic status (SES) is often used as an indicator of how a family is doing in comparison to other families. Socio-economic status is a composite of family income, mother's and father's educational level, and mother's and father's occupation. Each student was given a SES score and placed in one of four quartiles, lowest to highest, each with about 25% of the students. There was considerable diversity among eighth graders in terms of the various components of socio-economic status.

There was a great range in terms of total family income. About one-fifth of eighth grade families had an income of less than $15,000 (below poverty level). Two-fifths of eighth grade families were in the middle income category earning between $25,000 and $50,000. Another one-fifth were from families of incomes of $50,000 or more including 4% from families with incomes of more than $100,000.

There was considerable difference in relation to income and ethnicity. For example, among all families of eighth graders who had an income of less than $15,000 per year, 41% were Black, 35% White, 19% Hispanic, 3% Asian, and 2% Native American. Among those with incomes of $100,000 or more, 87% were White, 7% Asian, 2% Black, 3% Hispanic, and 1% Native American.

There was also great diversity in terms of the amount of schooling parents had completed. For example, about the same percentages of the fathers/male guardians of the eighth grade students had a graduate degree, 12%, as had not completed high school, 15% (mothers, 8% advanced degree; and 15%, less than high school). Over half of the eighth graders had at least one parent who had completed some schooling beyond high school. Within that group, more had completed less than a four year degree (men, 17%; women, 20%) than had graduated from a four-year college (men, 13%; women, 12%).

Occupations were spread over the ten categories included in the study. The highest percentages in any one occupational category were women, 26% clerical sales and 22% service occupations; men, 36% craftsperson or operator, and 17% professional/technical/ or business owner. Only 2% were farmers.

Implications

The gaps between those who have the most and those who have the least have widened substantially although fairly quietly over the past thirty years. The number of families at each end of the continuum has grown and the number in the middle section has shrunk. However, because mass media and our general view of ourselves remains that of our sharing in a large middle class, we pay less attention to the effect of the major gaps. We may not pay enough helpful attention to those youth and parents who are in the lowest quartile of socio-economic status. Differences in income can affect youth and youth programs because costly activities may be easily available to those from families with high incomes but not to those with low incomes. Differences in educational level can affect how well parents are able to help with homework and encourage their children to complete more education.

Sex of Students –The sample was made up of an almost equal percentage of boys, 49.8% and girls, 50%.

There were very few substantial differences between eighth grade boys and girls. Sex of student was the only one of the seven variables used in this study that didn't show substantial differences when run against the other six variables.

Implications

Many gender differences have dissappeared for this modern group of youngsters. Those working with youth

and parenting programs need to keep pace and continue to promote equality rather than traditional roles.

Region – More respondents were from the Southern and North Central regions than from the Northeast or West.

Region is the smallest geographic division reported in the NELS:88 data. (Individual states are not identified for reasons of confidentiality.) The study used four U.S. Census regions: Northeast, North Central, South, and West. The largest percentage of the eighth graders, over one-third, lived in the Southern region. One-fourth of students lived in the North Central region. Lesser numbers, about one-fifth each, were from the Northeastern and Western regions. The difference in numbers in part is due to differences in the area and population included in each region and in part may be due to the fact that the South and North Central parts of the United States have more school systems.

Urbanicity – The majority of schools were in suburban areas. Among the remainder, somewhat more eighth graders went to schools in rural areas.

Urbanicity is the term for the population density of the place where the eighth graders lived. The Department of Education team used three residence categories: urban or central city; suburban, defined as an "area surrounding a central city within a county constituting a Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA)"; and rural, the area outside of a MSA including cities not large enough to be a MSA. Rural residents located within a MSA would be considered as suburban residents. The largest percentage, 44%, lived in suburban areas. Nearly one-third of the eighth graders lived in a rural area outside a MSA and 25% lived in a central city.

Implications

Those who are used to thinking of rural residents as farm, non-farm and village residents without regard to location related to a metropolitan area, will need to adjust their thinking to rural as used in this study. Farmers living in a county which is part of a Metropolitan area are classified as suburban. On the other hand, people living in a small city outside of a Metropolitan area, are considered rural in this study. The heavy shift in population to population-dense areas means that federal agencies are changing their definition of rural and it is harder to get information nationwide for the areas previously considered rural.

Mobility – Mobility and changing schools was a fact of life for many youngsters. Fewer than half of the eighth graders in the study had remained in the same school system for all eight grades.

Less than one-half, 45%, of eighth graders had been in the same school system since the first grade. Over one-third have changed schools two or more times. One in ten had changed schools more than three times in eight years.

Family break up seemed to have a clear relationship to changing schools. Although eighth graders living with both original parents were least likely to have changed schools, almost half of this group had changed schools at least once. Children in single-parent families were less likely to have changed schools than were those living with one natural parent and a stepparent. The percentages changing schools more than three times were both parents, 7%; single parent with mother, 16%; single parent with father, 19%; mother and stepfather, 24%; father and stepmother, 27%; and someone other than either parent, 25%.

White eighth graders were less apt to have changed schools than were those of other ethnic backgrounds. Although the pattern of the percent of those making four or more changes showed a decrease as SES status decreased, SES appeared to have less effect than other factors. Urban eighth graders were more likely to have changed schools than were rural and suburban youth. Eighth graders living in the Western region were more likely to have changed schools than youth from the other regions.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Never changed schools: Native American, 29% to 48% White	19
Socio-economic Status	
Never changed schools: father/stepmother, 24% to 53% both parents	29
Changed schools four or more times: both parents, 7% to 27% father/stepmother	20
Family Type	
Never changed schools: father/stepmother, 24% to 53% both parents	29
Changed schools four or more times: both parents, 7% to 27% father/stepmother	20
Urbanicity	
Never changed schools: urban, 36% to 53% rural	17
Region	
Never changed schools: West, 37% to 53% North Central and Northeast	16
Changed schools four or more times: Northeast, 6% to 17% West	11

Implications

It is not clear from the data whether the school changes also meant that the family moved great distances. Some families move about in the same general locality. Other families move from one state to another. Mobility can be disrupting and unsettling to the youngster because it means many new adjustments. A young person can be helped to learn strategies for making such adjustments, and those strategies often are helpful later as an adult.

The mobility of families with school aged children can also be viewed as a problem by those who design multi-year nonschool programs. Logistically it is easier for such programs to work with the half of the population which stays put, rather than constantly searching out and involving the new youngsters that move into the community. National programs might find it useful to develop a computerized transferal system to help youngsters who move to quickly relocate into similar programs. An additional problem is posed in that people from other locations may have different experiences and ideas. The challenge to program developers is to be flexible and allow all individuals to bring past experiences to new learning situations so that they can be shared and can enrich the local program. Integrating new youth into an existing program also offers opportunity of one peer helping another.

Religion – Most of the adult respondents indicated a religious affiliation. Although two ethnic groups were closely tied to specific religions, there was variation within these groups.

Over half of the eighth graders' parents indicated a Protestant Christian background with the largest percentage, 24%, being Baptists followed by Methodist, 6%; Lutheran, 4%; Presbyterian, 4%; and Episcopalian, 2% and other Protestants, 7%. About a third were Catholics. Two percent were Jewish, 2% and about 7% indicated other religions such as Moslem, Buddism, or Hindu which were less than 1% each. Only 3% indicated no religious affiliation. Most of the subgroups in the table which followswere made up of less than one-half of one percent, but for simplicity we are starting the range at 1%.

With one exception - there were no Jewish affiliations among Native Americans - some respondents in each ethnic group indicated each religion. No ethnic group was solely one religion although 60% of the Black respondents were Baptist and 69% of the Hispanic respondents were Catholic. Differences in relation to socio-economic status were less marked. However, there were more Baptists in the lower quartile and more Catholics in the highest quartile. Family type was especially interesting because of the traditional Catholic church position against divorce. In single-parent homes where the eighth grader was living with the mother, 32% were Baptist and 26% were Catholic. In the single-parent father households, 24% were Baptist and 31% were Catholics. There were also differences related to urbanicity and region.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Hispanic: Lutheran and Presbyterian, 1% to 70% Catholic	69
Black: Lutheran and Presbyterian, 1% to 60% Baptist	59
Asian: Eastern Orthodox and Episcapalian, 1% to 32% Catholic	31
Native American: Methodist and Episcopalian, 3% to 34% Catholic	31
White: Jewish and Episcopalian, 2% to 29% Catholic	27
Socio-economic Status	
Lowest SES quartile: Buddhist and Episcopalian, 1% to 34% Baptists	33
Highest SES quartile: Hindu, 1% to 33% Catholic	32
Family Type	
Neither parent: Presbyterian, 2% to 38% Baptist	36
Both parents: Buddhist and Eastern Orthodox, 1% to 33% Catholic	32
Mother: Jewish, 1% to 32% Baptist	31
Father: Jewish and Eastern Orthodox , 1% to 31% Catholic	30
Mother and stepfather: Jewish, 1% to 30% Baptist	29
Father and stepmother: Jewish, 1% to 25% Baptist	24
Urbanicity	
Urban: Buddhist, 1% to 36% Catholic	35
Suburban: Eastern Orthodox, 1% to 35% Catholic	34
Rural: Episcopalian, 2% to 29% Baptist	27
Region	
Northeast: Eastern Orthodox, 1% to 46% Catholic	45
South: Jewish, 1% to 43% Baptist	42
West: Buddhist, Jewish, 1% to 35% Catholic	34
North Central: Jewish and Episcopalian, 1% to 33% Catholic	32
4-H	
Leavers: Episcopalian, 1% to 33% Baptist	32
Nevers: Jewish, 2% to 33% Catholic	31
Joiners: Jewisn and Episcopalian 1% to 31% Baptist	30
Stayers: Episcopalian, 2% to 29% Baptist	27

Implications

Although this information may be most useful to those who are working with church youth programs, it is important that those working on community programs remember the religious diversity among ethnic groups, socio-economic quartiles, and family types.

HOUSEHOLDS

There was considerable range in the extent to which the 24 comparisons relating to the family varied in producing differences of 10 percentage points or more. Region and sex of students showed no substantial differences - boys and girls evidently had the same variance in family background - and ethnicty, 50%, showed the greatest percent of differences of 10 percentage points or more.

Families – Family and household makeup varied.

Most, 64%, of the eighth graders lived with both natural or adoptive parents. However, a fairly sizeable number, over a third, lived in some kind of family other than with both natural or adoptive parents. Fifteen percent lived with one natural/adoptive parent and a stepparent or other guardian of the opposite sex (12% with their mother and a stepfather; 3% with their father and a stepmother). Twenty percent lived with only one parent (17% with their mother and 3% with the father) and 3% lived with someone other than either parent.

Family type was one of the characteristics examined in this study. Slightly less than a third, 31%, of the comparisons yielded a difference in range across the types of 10 or more percentage points. The range often was between those living with both parents and those living with someone other than either parent. Usually the findings were fairly similar for those living with one natural or adoptive parent whether in a single-parent family or with a stepparent.

The study directions asked that the person most responsible for the eighth grader's schooling respond. Over four-fifths of the parent respondents were women. The majority of the respondents were married, 77%, or living in a marriage relationship, 2%. Among the others, 12% were divorced, 3% were widowed, and 4% were separated from their spouse. Black families showed the highest percentages of respondents who were widowed, separated, never married, or divorced. Asians showed the lowest percentages in these categories. The percent married (rather than widowed, divorced, separated, or never married) increased as SES quartile increased. However, even in the lowest SES quartile, 61% of the respondents were married. In the highest quartile, 11% of the respondents were not married.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Father in the household: Black, 42% to 83% Asian	41
Live with both parents: Black, 38% to 78% Asian	40
Single-parent family: Asian, 11% to 38% Black	27
Respondent is married: Black, 49% to 87% Asian	38
Respondent never married: Asian and White, 1% to 14% Black	13
Respondent divorced or widowed: Asian, 9% to 21% Black	12
Respondent separated: White and Asian, 2% to 13% Black	11
Socio-Economic Status	
Father in household: lowest, 55% to 82% highest SES quartile	27
Live with both parents: lowest, 50% to 75% highest SES quartile	25
Single parent family: lowest, 29% to 11% highest SES quartile	18
Respondent is married: lowest, 61% to 89% highest SES quartile	28
Respondent is divorced or widowed: lowest, 21% to 9% highest SES quartile	12
Urbanicity	
Respondent is married: urban, 68% to 80% suburban	12
Father in household: urban, 62% to 72% suburban	10
4-H	
Father in household: joiners, 61% to 76% stayers	15
Live with both parents: joiners, 54% to 71% stayers	17
Single parent family: stayers, 14% to 25% joiners	11
Respondent is married: joiners, 67% to 85% suburban	18

Almost a third of the eighth graders had a natural or adoptive parent who lived outside their home. Most eighth graders, 92%, said their mother lived with them (other female guardian, 5%) while fewer, 69%, said their father lived with them (other male guardian, 13%). Black eighth graders were least likely and Asian

eighth graders were most likely to say their father lived with them. Fathers were more likely to be present in the higher SES quartiles as compared with the lowest quartile. The eighth grader's father was less likely to be in the household in urban areas than in rural or suburban areas. Three percent lived with someone other than the respondent at least part of the year.

Siblings – Almost all eighth graders had one or more siblings. Many had older siblings.

Only 6% indicated they did not have any brothers or sisters. About one-third had three or more siblings. Four-fifths had a sibling living at home. Two-thirds had older siblings and almost two-thirds had siblings in high school. There were substantial differences in relation to ethnicity, socio-economic status, and family type.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Five or more siblings: White, 9% to 19% Black, Native American	10
Siblings at home: Black, 74% to 85% White	11
Siblings in high school: Black, 59% to 74% Asian	15
Siblings are high school graduates: Asian, 46% to 59% Black	13
Socio-Economic Status	
Five or more siblings: lowest, 20% to 6% highest SES quartile	14
Siblings at home: lowest, 78% to 88% highest SES quartile	10
Family Type	
Five or more siblings: both parents, 8% to 22% father/stepmother	14
Siblings at home: neither parent, 62% to 86% both parents, mother/stepfather	24
Siblings in high school: single father, 54% to 72% father/stepmother	18
Siblings are high school graduates: father/stepmother, 41% to 54% father only	13
4-H	
Siblings are high school graduates: joiners, 43% to 53% stayers	10

Others – Some households were made up of people in addition to parents.

In some households the grandparent had major responsibility for the eighth grader as evidenced by the finding that 1% of the respondents were grandparents. In all, 7% of the eighth graders said that a grandparent lived with them. Seven percent also indicated that other relatives lived with them. Three percent indicated that a nonrelative lived with them. Asian and Black eighth graders were most likely to have a grandparent in their household. Black eighth graders were also most likely to indicate that some other relative lived with them. Hispanics and Native Americans were most likely to indicate that they had a brother living in their household.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Other relatives in the household: White, 4% to 18% Black	14
Brothers in the household: Black, 54% to 64% Hispanic and Native American	10

Implications

Those planning programs must be alert to the great diversity in households and be able to take that diversity in stride showing acceptance to all households. Sometimes we inadvertently talk as though all youngsters are living with both parents and have only one set of parents. It might not be unusual, for example, when a youth group plans a parents' program, for some youngsters to bring four parents as guests.

In addition, we need to be aware that the family may be composed of a variety of siblings - full/adoptive, half-, step-, and cousin/other. These siblings may reside fulltime in the household or come and go.

Those planning programs for parents also need to show participants that they recognize and accept diverse patterns in parenting and it is fine for a grandparent to come to parenting classes. In fact, those working with parenting classes may want to consider what part of the content they teach is generic and what is context specific, conditional upon the amount of time and arrangements in which a parent sees the child. For example, do fathers who live with the child and fathers who only have weekend or vacation custody need different kinds of help related to parenting? Do parents where there is only one parent in the home need more or something different than where there are two parents in the home?

FAMILY RISK FACTORS (NELS)

"Youth at Risk" has been a popular label for the past several years. Educators, sociologists, and other professionals concerned about and working with youth have defined risk in a variety of ways. Those developing the Department of Education NELS:88 Study chose the following six factors as ones which they felt indicated risk: single parent, income less than $15,000, parents do not have a high school diploma, sibling has dropped out of school, home alone after school for more than three hours, and limited language proficiency. We have added the term "family" risk to the NELS:88 study list to distinguish this list from other perspectives on risk, risk as evidenced by the actual social behaviors of youth, and risk as indicated by their attitude toward and performance in school.

Comparisons on the seven variables showed the greatest number of substantial differences appeared for SES, where 88% of the comparisons yielded substantial differences (10 percentage points or more). Ethnicity and family type also showed a high percent of comparisons, 63%, yielding substantial differences. The finding that those from families with lower socio-economic status, ethnic groups other than White, and family type showed more of the risk factors is in part explained because several of the risk factors either were part of the definition of socio-economic status (income and education), or were closely tied either to ethnic heritage (limited language proficiency) or to family type (single-parent family). This section summarizes findings about these risk factors.

Number – **Almost half of the eighth graders held at least one family situational characteristic that some experts believe is associated with high social risk. One in five show two or more characteristics.**

Almost half, 47%, showed at least one of the six characteristics identified by the NELS:88 study team as being indicators of risk. A fourth showed only one of the characteristics, and one in five had two or more risk factors.

Blacks were most likely to show one or more of the factors and Whites were least likely to do so. However, it is to be noted that more than a third of White youth showed one or more risk factors while over a fourth of Black eighth graders were free of the risk factors. As would be expected the number of risk factors differed markedly with ethnic background and socio-economic status. The greatest difference came between the low and moderately-low socio-economic quartiles. The percentages showing no risk factors were as follows: lowest quartile, 18%; next to lowest, 53%; next to highest, 65%; highest, 78%. The percentages showing three or more risk factors were as follows: 53%, 17%, 8%, 3%. When socio-economic status was

examined within ethnic groups, substantial differences among quartiles appeared. Whites and Asians were less likely to show risk factors than were those of other ethnic groups with SES quartile held constant.

Boys and girls were very similar in terms of percent showing those family characteristics thought by the NELS study team to indicate risk. As would be expected, including single parents as a risk factor affects the comparison of various family types. The percentages of parent and stepparent families showing at least one risk were mother and male guardian, 43%; father and female guardian, 37%. In addition to the range shown in the table that follows, the percentages showing 3 or more risk factors were as follows: father and female guardian, 10%; mother and male guardian, 13%; single family with father, 43%; someone other than natural parents, 59%. Urban and rural eighth graders were somewhat more likely to show one or more risk factors than were suburban eighth graders. The greatest difference among regions appeared between the South and the Northeast.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
No NELS family risk factors: Black, 28% to 62% White	34
Three or more: Black, 41% to 14% of White	27
Socio-economic Status	
No: lowest, 18% to 78% highest SES quartile	60
Three or more: lowest, 3% to 53% highest SES quartile	50
Family Type	
No: single mothers and fathers, 0% to 71% both parents	71
Three or more: both parents, 8% to 63% single mothers	55
Urbanicity	
No: urban, 46% to 59% suburban	13
Three or more: suburban 16% to 26% urban	10
Region	
No: Southern, 48% to 60% Northeastern	12
4-H	
No: joiners, 40% to 61% stayers	21
Three or more: leavers, 16% to 30% joiners	14

Single parents – More than one in five eighth graders lived in single parent homes.

The percentages of eighth graders of various ethnic heritages living in a single-parent home were as follows: Asian, 11%; White, 16%; Hispanic; 20%; Native American, 25%; and Blacks, 38%. The range from lowest to highest socio-economic quartile was from 29% to 11%. The percent of eighth graders living in single-parent families decreased markedly in all ethnic groups as SES quartile increased. However, when SES quartile was controlled, sizeable differences among ethnic groups remained.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Socio-economic Status	
Single-parent family: lowest, 29% to 11% highest SES quartile	18
4-H	
Single-parent family: stayers, 14% to 25% joiners	11

Low Income – More than one in five lived in families with a total family income of less than $15,000.

There were major differences in the percent of families of various ethnic heritages which had incomes of $15,000 or less. The percentages were as follows: Whites, 14%; Asians, 18%; Hispanics, 38%; Native Americans, 40%; and Blacks, 47%. There were substantial differences related to family type. Income was

only one of three factors considered when socio-economic status was calculated. As will be noted in the table at the end of this section, not all families in the lowest SES quartile had incomes below $15,000 and a few in the highest quartile had incomes this low.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Family income under $15,000: White, 14% to 47% Black	33
Socio-economic Status	
Family income under $15,000: lowest, 62% to 1% highest SES quartile	61
Family Type	
Family income under $15,000: both parents, 12% to 53% single mother	41
4-H	
Family income under $15,000: nevers, 19% to 31% joiners	12

Parent Education – One in ten eighth graders had parents who have not completed high school.

There were major differences in relation to educational level according to ethnic background. However, a percentage within each ethnic group appeared in each educational category. In all instances except Hispanics, the percentage with a college degree matched or in many cases far exceeded the percent who had not completed high school. The percentages with less than high school educations were White, 6%; Asian, 8%; Native American, 12%; Black, 15%; and Hispanic, 32%. The percentages who had completed college were Black, 15%; Hispanic, 19%; Native American, 22%; White, 31%; and Asian, 49%.

Most, 61%, of eighth graders in the lowest socio-economic group had at least one parent who had completed high school or gone further. However, the more interesting comparisons here are not within ethnic groups but across ethnic groups. Among those in the lowest socio-economic quartile, the percentage whose parents had not completed high school were as follows: White and Native American, 31%; Black, 35%; Asian, 40%; and Hispanic, 62%.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Socio-economic Status	
Parents less than high school education: lowest, 39% to < 1% upper two quartiles	38
Family Type	
Parents less than high school education: father/stepmother, 8% to 24% neither parent	16
4-H	
Parents less than high school education: leavers and stayers, 7% to 18% joiners	11

Alone After School – More than one in ten, 14%, were home more than three hours after school without an adult present.

Most eighth graders, 87%, spent some time at home after school with no adult present. However, only 14% said they spent two or more hours alone. Differences related to ethnicity, socio-economic status, sex of student, urbanicity, and region did not reach 10 percentage points. The range for family types in the percent of eighth graders saying that there was no adult home for three or more hours after school was from 12% of those living with both natural or adoptive parents to 20% of those living with their father in single-parent family. The youngsters who were living with someone other than their parents were most likely always to have an adult (probably a grandparent or other older relative) home when they returned from school. More information on who was home and where eighth graders went after school is given in the next section.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Family Type	PPD
No hours alone after school: mother/stepfather, 10% to 21% neither parent	11
No one else home after school: neither parent, 14% to 26% single father	12

Dropouts – One in ten had a sibling who dropped out of school.

Asian eighth graders were least likely and Hispanic eighth graders were most likely to have had a brother or sister drop out of school. Over a third of the youngsters from the lowest SES quartile had had a sibling leave high school. There was a clear relationship between SES quartile and having a sibling who had dropped out of school for all ethnic groups except Native Americans. The percentages in the lowest SES quartile with a sibling dropout were as follows: Whites, 34%; Blacks, 30%; Hispanics, 30%; Native Americans, 27%; Asians, 22%. Note that the percent of eighth graders in the lowest SES quartile who had one or more siblings who had dropped out of school was higher for Whites than for other ethnic groups. The percentages in the highest SES quartiles with a sibling dropout were Native American, 22%; Black, 8%; Hispanic, 6%; White, 4%; and Asian, 1%.

Eighth graders living with both natural or adoptive parents were least likely to have had a sibling drop out of school. Those living in single parent families were not more likely to have a school dropout in their family than were those living with one parent and a stepparent (19% of those in a single parent family with their father, 23% of those living in a single-parent family with their mother or with their mother and a stepfather, and 24% of those living with their father and a stepmother).

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Sibling dropped out of school: Asian, 10% to 25% Hispanic	15
Socio-economic Status	
Sibling dropped out of school: lowest, 32% to 4% highest SES quartile	28
Family Type	
Sibling dropped out of school: both parents, 13% to 31% neither parent	18
4-H	
Siblings dropped out of school: leavers and stayers, 13% to 25% joiners	12

Limited Language – Very few, about two percent, had limited English proficiency.

There were major differences related to ethnic heritage. The percentages of students classified as language minority (language other than English usually used in the home) were as follows: White, 3%; Black, 5%; Native American, 27%; Asian, 51%; and Hispanic, 63%. The percent classified as language minority decreased as socio-economic status increased. However, some youngsters in all SES categories came from homes where the parents spoke a language other than English. The ranges between lowest and highest SES quartiles within ethnic groups were as follows: Asian, 66% to 46%; Hispanic, 79% to 36%; Black, 5% to 6%; White, 5% to 2%; Native American (including Alaskan natives), 42%, to 18%. There was a sizeable difference related to region with a range from 5% of North Central to 23% of Western eighth graders classified as language minority (South and Northeast, 11%).

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Minority language used in the home: White, 3% to 63% Hispanic	60
Socio-economic Status	
Minority language used in the home: lowest, 23% to 6% highest SES quartile	17
Region	
Minority language used in the home: North Central, 5% to 23% Western	18

Implications

Family Risk Factors General. The most important implication is that although some subgroups examined showed a higher percentage with risk factors than others, family risk appeared among all ethnic groups, all socio-economic groups, and all family types.

However, we are concerned about the indicators the Department of Education chose. The inclusion of limited English proficiency and single families mean that the context for risk is that of succeeding (surviving) in a society in which certain middle class White views predominate. These factors might or might not be indicators of risk if our society were less preoccupied with such traditional views and were more acceptant of diversity. We also question whether 14- and 15-year-old youth should not be able to be on their own after school. Many are babysitters for younger children. We applied our analytical framework to the NELS version of risk because that framework is typical of many that have been posed in defining risk. Because many of the readers will be middle class Whites, it may be useful for you to see the extent to which all youth run risk under these definitions. However, in addition to presenting the NELS studies factors, we did our own analysis of risk factors related to school attainment which will be summarized in a later section.

Sibling Dropout. Among the individual factors included in the NELS risk cluster, the one that we feel may be most relevant for special attention is that of sibling dropout. Older brothers and sisters provide models. If things are going well in the life of the dropout, a younger brother or sister may be likely to follow that model. If, on the other hand, they see that the older sibling is facing problems, they may make a greater attempt to complete high school. Sibling dropout also is a partial indicator of situations where there is little support from the family for the youngster to complete school.

AFTER SCHOOL

The NELS:88 survey gave a good deal of attention to what eighth graders do after school. Who was home after school, the number of hours the eighth grader was home alone, and where the eighth grader went after school did not vary substantially in relation to sex of student, urbanicity, region, or 4-H participation.

Location – Relatively few eighth graders took part in activities at school after classes.

Most parents, 78%, said their eighth graders went home after school. Other places that eighth graders went were organized sports, 8%; someone else's house 7%, (4% friend's, 2% relative's, 1% neighbor's and less than 1% to a sitter's house); extracurricular activities, 5%; and to a job, 1%. A few, less than 1%, indicated that they did not know where the eighth grader went. When the seven variables were examined, none of the differences were as great as 10 percentage points.

People at Home – Most of the eighth graders said there was usually someone home when they returned from school.

About one eighth grader in five said there was usually no one at home when he or she returned from school. Almost half said their mother was usually home after school. Some, 15%, indicated that their fathers were home and about a fifth said that an older brother or sister was home. Very few, 5%, indicated that an adult neighbor or sitter was present. About a third said there was usually a younger brother or sister at home.

The percent saying there was usually no adult at home when they returned from school showed moderate differences related to ethnicity but not as great as 10 percentage points. The percent saying there was usually no adult at home when they returned from school ranged from 12% of those in the lowest SES quartile to 21% of those in the top two quartiles.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Home after school:	
Younger sibling: White, 30% to 43% Hispanic	13
Mother usually: Black, 42% to 55% Hispanic	13
Adult relative usually: White, 8% to 20% Black	12
Siblings: Black, 74% to 85% White	11
Father usually: White, 14% to 25% Native American	11
Socio-economic Status	
Home after school:	
Mother: lowest, 58% to 40% highest SES quartile	18
Father: lowest, 19% to 9% highest SES quartile	10
Adult relative: lowest, 16% to 6% highest SES quartile	10
Family Type	
Home after school (usually):	
Mother never: both parents, 11% to 56% single father	45
Mother usually: father only, 14% to 56% neither parent	42
Father usually: mother only, 2% to 29% father only	27
Younger siblings usually: father only, 18% to 38% father/stepmother	20
Adult relative usually: both parents, 8% to 22% neither parent	14
No one else: neither parent, 14% to 26% father only	12

Implications

Only somewhat more than one in ten indicated they usually went to organized sports or school extracurricular activities after school. Yet, as will be seen later, most youngsters take part in such activities. Have all such offerings been worked into the regular school day? If the data are accurate in your community, does this mean that nonschool youth programs might meet immediately after school? Where else are the eighth graders? What are they doing? What programs could be offered (apart from existing ones) to meet their needs?

HOME RESOURCES

The greatest range in variation across the seven variables appeared in relation to the 11 home resources. There were no substantial differences in relation to region and urbanicity. However, 91% of the items showed differences related to both ethnicity and socio-economic status.

Equipment – Many eighth graders reported that they had equipment at home needed in their studies or in nonschool educational activities.

Most students had access to educational equipment: calculator, 95%; VCR, 84%; typewriter, 72%; and computer 42%. As will be seen in the table below, the extent to which eighth graders had access to computers, typewriters and VCR differed according to ethnicity, socio-economic status, and family type. Access to computers also differed with sex of student and urbanicity.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Computer in home: Hispanic, 27% to 51% Asian	24
Typewriter in home: Native American, 59% to 80% Asian	21
VCR in home: Black, 76% to 90% Asian	14
Socio-economic Status	
Computer in home: lowest, 21% to 65% highest SES quartile	44
Typewriter in home: lowest, 56% to 85% highest SES quartile	29
VCR in home: lowest, 72% to 92% highest SES quartile	20
Family Type	
Typewriter in home: neither parent, 60% to 78% both parents	18
Computer in home: neither parent, 31% to 47% both parents	16
VCR in home: mother only, 72% to 87% both parents	15
Sex of Student	
Computer in home: girls 37%; 47% boys	10
Urbanicity	
Computers: rural, 34% to 48% suburban	14
4-H	
VCR in home: joiners, 72% to 92% nevers	20

Print Materials – Most eighth graders also reported print materials in their homes.

Most had access to a dictionary, 98%; 50 or more books, 89%; encyclopedia, 79%; regular subscriptions to magazines, 75%, newspapers, 73%; and an atlas, 69%. Print material also differed according to ethnicity, socio-economic status, and family type. Access to an atlas differed with sex of student.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Atlas in home: Black, 45% to 75% White	30
Magazines in home: Hispanic, 62% to 80% White	18
Books in home: Hispanic, 75% to 92% White	17
Encyclopedia in home: Hispanic, 68% to 83% White	15
Newspaper in home: Hispanic, 62% to 76% White	14
Socio-economic Status	
Magazines in home: lowest, 54% to 91% highest SES quartile	37
Atlas in home: lowest, 49% to 85% highest SES quartile	36
Newspaper in home: lowest, 61% to 85% highest SES quartile	24
Books in home: lowest, 76% to 98% highest SES quartile	22
Encyclopedia in home: lowest, 70% to 85% highest SES quartile	15

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More (continued)

Family Type	
Atlas in home: neither parent and mother only, 56% to 74% both parents	18
Newspaper in home: mother only, 62% to 77% both parents	15
Magazines in home: mother only and neither parent, 65% to 79% both parents	14
Encyclopedia in home: father only, 71% to 83% both parents	12
Books in home: single parent and neither parent, 80% to 92% both parents	12
Sex of Student	
Atlas in home: girls, 66%; 87% boys	21
4-H	
Atlas in home: joiners, 62% to 75% stayers	13
Books in home: joiners, 84% to 94% stayers	10

Own Place – Most had their own bedroom, but fewer had a specific place to study.

Most students, about four-fifths, said they had their own bedroom. About two-fifths had a specific place to study in their home. Even though in all instances having a particular resource increased markedly as SES quartile increased, some in the lowest quartile had the various aids to study and a few in the top quartile did not. Usually Asian youngsters were most likely to have various study aids in their homes.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Place to study in home: White, 39% to 57% Asian	18
Own bedroom: Hispanic, 71% to 85% White	14
Socio-economic Status	
Own bedroom: lowest, 73% to 90% highest SES quartile	17
Place to study in home: lowest, 37% to 49% highest SES quartile	12
Family Type	
Own bedroom: neither parent, 75% to 86% father only	11
4-H	
Place to study in home: leavers, 37% to 48% joiners	11

Most, 94%, said their family had a washing machine, 86% had a clothes dryer, 82% had a microwave oven, and 58% had an electric dishwasher.

Implications

The findings indicate that those working with nonschool programs can expect that most teens will have access to resources either in their own home or at the home of a friend. There is no way of knowing whether the computer is primarily equipped with games or parents' spread sheets, but it is probable that a good many youngsters have access to word processing and other programs. Because access to computers is limited in some schools, some nonschool programs may want to include activities which help youngsters increase their proficiency in using a computer. In addition, those working with very low income families may want to develop study centers or find ways of being sure that youngsters have as easy access to equipment and print materials as do youngsters from more affluent families.

EIGHTH GRADERS

This section covers several areas: two characteristics of the eighth grader, age and special needs; future expectations, views of self, communication with others, and the health risk of smoking cigarettes. Overall, 19% of the comparisons related to items specific to the eighth grader showed substantial differences. The range was from 0% of the comparisons for smoking to 11% for age, special needs and future expectations to 26% of the communication items.

AGE AND SPECIAL NEEDS

The age of the eighth grader showed substantial differences for all variables except urbanicity and region. Special needs showed only a substantial difference in relation to family type.

Age – **Most eighth graders were 14 or 15 years old. The majority of the adult respondents were in their late thirties or early forties.**

The majority of the eighth graders, 63%, were born in 1974 which would have made them about 14 years old in 1988. Over a third were older than 14 (30% born in 1973, 6% born in 1972 or before.) A few, less than 1%, were younger than 14. Age differences of 10 or more percentage points appeared in relation to ethnicity, socio-economic status, family type, sex of student and 4-H.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Born before 1973: Asian, 32% to 48% Native American	16
Socio-economic Status	
Born before 1973: Lowest, 52% to 25% highest SES quartile	27
Family Type	
Born before 1973: neither parent, 52% to 32% both parents	20
Sex of Student	
Born before 1973: girls, 30%; 42% boys	12
4-H	
Born before 1973: nevers, 34% to 52% joiners	18

The majority of the adult respondents, 64%, were born between 1945 and 1954, and were in their late thirties or early forties. Those who were older might have had this child later in life or might be grandparents. The 1% who were born after 1959 may either have had this child when they were very young or might be an aunt, or young stepmother. Differences related to the variables did not reach 10 percentage points.

Implications

In general, how much difference is there between a 14-year-old and a 15-year-old in their physical, intellectual, social, and moral maturity? We grant that chronological age is not necessarily a good gauge of maturity. Some 12-year-olds are more mature than some 16-year-olds. However, there is a likelihood for those eighth graders who are 15 or older to think of themselves as older than 14-year-olds. Ordinarily we might ignore age differences of as much as a year or two, but because of the turbulence of the early teen years, a few months' difference may be important. Those conducting programs for eighth graders or for parents may want to give special attention to possible consequences of failing to recognize the variance in maturity among eighth graders.

The fact that differences in the range in eighth graders ages of 10 percentage points or more appeared in relation to all of the variables in this study except urbanicity and region, identifies the complex interlinking of these various variables. It raises a question in some instances of whether the relationship is more of a relationship of age of the student than a direct relationship with other variables, even though one of the other variables such as socio-economic status may have affected the age at which the youngster is as an eighth grader.

Special Needs – Almost one in five eighth graders had some kind of learning, emotional, physical or health problem which might interfere with their school work. Most who had such problems were receiving special help.

Almost a fifth of the eighth grade students, 18%, had a learning, emotional, health, or physical problem which could affect school performance. Eighteen percent of eighth graders' parents said that their children had a special learning, emotional, health, or physical problem. The individual percentages were: learning problems, 7%; health problems, 4%; emotional problems, 3%; and hearing problems, 3%.

Eighth graders in the lowest SES quartile were somewhat more likely to have one or more of these problems. However, the difference (21% to 14%) was not as great as 10 percentage points. Differences across ethnic groups were small (14% to 19%). The difference related to family type exceeded 10 points and was one of the few instances where eighth graders living with both parents did not appear at either end of the range.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Family Type	PPD
One or more learning or health problems: father only 8% to 22% father/stepmother	14

The parents were also asked whether the child was receiving special services related to a problem. It is to be noted that although only 2% said their children had speech problems, 7% said their children had received help for such problems. The percent saying their children had received help for learning and emotional problems was 1% higher than the percent saying their child had such a problem. Four percent of the eighth graders were currently enrolled in a special education program for students with learning disabilities.

Implications

Physical and emotional problems are less visible dimensions of diversity, but they can make a youngster feel different from other youngsters and pose special problems. Often problems which affect learning and performance are hard to recognize by those who have infrequent contact with youngsters. Those working with nonschool programs need to be alert to the signs of learning, emotional, and physical problems and be able to recognize when a program participant is likely to be in difficulty. It may be possible to avoid placing such youngsters in embarrassing positions without appearing to single them out for special attention. For example, when one knows that a child is dyslexic, one finds other ways of having them share in an activity, rather than asking them to read aloud to the group or to write something on the blackboard. When aware that a youngster has a hearing problem, one is careful to try to place oneself so that youngster can read lips or hear without straining to listen.

Even though most youngsters receive help in school related to a special need, follow-up help on self-image

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may be as important as correcting the specific problem. Those working with youth programs and with parents can help youngsters adjust.

Over the past several years most school districts have built up the capacity for identifying youngsters with learning problems and helping them deal with those problems. Now with increasing pressure to reduce costs, those hard won gains for youngsters with special needs may be in danger. It is important that community leaders become well-informed about the comparative value of various services and programs offered by their local school district and seek ways of keeping those which are essential.

FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

Overall, only 11% of the comparisons in this cluster yielded substantial differences. The range across the seven variables was from 0% related to urbanicity to 28% related to socio-economic status. Eighth graders see their futures without the clouds of the present.

School – **The eighth graders had great expectations for their futures. Most expected to complete high school and many expected to continue their education beyond high school.**

Almost all, 98%, expected to complete high school and 89% expected to complete some schooling beyond high school. Almost two-thirds, 62%, said they were 'very certain' they would continue their education beyond high school. Over two-thirds expected to complete a baccalaureate degree even though only a third were sure they would take a college preparatory program in high school. A fourth said they did not know what kind of course they would take in high school. About a fifth said they would take a vocational course and 14% said they would take a general course.

Although expectations and certainty about amount of education showed substantial (10 or more percentage points) difference related to ethnicity and family type, as will be seen in the table that follows, both the greatest number and the greatest differences appeared related to socio-economic status. It is also worthy of note that there were not substantial differences between girls and boys in terms of their future expectations related to schooling.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Expect to graduate from college: Native American, 33% to 45% White	12
Expect to complete college postgraduate: Hispanic, 21% to 39% Asian	18
Expect to take college prep program: Native American, 17% to 38% Asian	21
Expect to take high school vocational program: White, 16% to 26% Black	10
Very sure will go to college: Hispanic and Native American, 52% to 68% Asian	16
Very sure will complete high school: Native American, 72% to 85% White	13
Socio-economic Status	
Expect to complete college postgraduate: lowest, 12% to 39% highest SES quartile	27
Expect to take college prep program: lowest, 17% to 43% highest SES quartile	26
Expect to graduate from college: lowest, 30% to 50% highest SES quartile	20
Expect to only complete high school: lowest, 22% to 2% highest SES quartile	20
Expect to attend college: lowest, 17% to 6% highest SES quartile	11
Expect to attend high school and vocational school: lowest, 15% to 3% highest SES quartile	12
Expect to take high school vocational program: lowest, 23% to 11% highest SES quartile	12
Certain to complete education beyond high school: lowest, 33% to 81% highest SES quartile	48
Very sure will complete high school: lowest, 72% to 91% highest SES quartile	19
Very sure will go to college: lowest, 44% to 81% highest SES quartile	37

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More (continued)

Family Type	
Expect to graduate from college: neither parent, 54% to 68% both parents	14
Expect to take college prep course: neither parent, 18% to 32% both parents	14
Very sure will complete high school: neither parent, 72% to 85% both parents	13
Very sure will go to college: father/stepmother, 49% to 64% both parents	15
4-H	
Very sure complete high school: joiners, 74% to 84% nevers	10
Expect to graduate from college: joiner, 35% to 45% leavers	10

Future Occupations – **Their expectations in terms of a future career varied with the highest percentages indicating professional or military/police positions.**

Almost half thought they would be in a professional, managerial, or technical position when they were 30. About one in ten said they did not know and did not try to project into the future. Of the 11 occupations indicated by eighth graders, only two, professional career other than science and engineering and military or police, showed a fairly high percentage expecting to be in such occupations when they were 30. Six percent each saw themselves as owning a business, having a career in a science or engineering field, or having a technical career. From three to five percent saw themselves in work classified as sales, crafts, or service. Only 2% thought they would be a housewife/homemaker when they were 30 (4% of the girls). One percent each thought they would be farmers or laborers.

Both professional career and military/police showed substantial (10 percentage points or more) differences related to ethnicity, sex of student and region. Profession also showed a substantial difference related to socio-economic status. However, as will be seen in the table on the next page, even though the difference was substantial, the highest percentage expecting to be in a professional position was about half.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
In profession at age 30: Native American, 20% to 35% Asian	15
Military/Police at age 30: Asian, 7% to 18% Native American	11
Socio-economic Status	
In profession at age 30: lowest, 20% to 39% highest SES quartile	19
Sex of Student	
In profession at age 30: girls, 20%; 35% boys	15
Military/Police at age 30: girls, 4%; 15% boys	11
Region	
In profession at age 30: South, 6% to 30% Northeast	24
Military/police at age 30: West, 10% to 28% South	18

Implications

Adults working with youth in informal situations need to help youngsters set realistically high goals, and develop plans for achieving those goals. Nonschool youth programs provide a variety of opportunities for youth to be in contact with people from many occupations. Special attention might be given to asking guest resource people to tell about their work and how they chose and prepared for it as well as presenting a demonstration or talk on the area where they are an expert. Adults should avoid making assumptions such as if a youngster has limited family resources, he or she won't be able to go on to further schooling and the career of his or her choice.

VIEWS OF SELF

More differences in the percent of substantial differences (but still a small percentage, 21%) appeared related to the eighth graders' views of self which included self-concept, locus of control, and their perception of how their school mates viewed them. The range in percent of comparisons according to variables which showed substantial differences was from 0% related to urbanicity to 42% related to ethnicity.

Self-Concept – Most eighth graders thought they are people of worth and value. However, sometimes they lost faith in themselves and occasionally felt 'no good', useless, or felt they had nothing of which to be proud.

Most eighth graders, 94%, felt good about themselves; thought they were equal in worth to others, 92%; felt they were able to do as well as others, 92%; and were satisfied with themselves, 88%. Girls were less likely to feel strongly satisfied with themselves than were boys. Black eighth graders showed the highest percentages feeling good about themselves . However, even though most feel good about themselves, some of all eighth graders, 15%, thought they had nothing of which to be proud, sometimes thought they were no good at all, 42%; or felt useless at times, 51% .

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Feel equal to others (strongly agree): Hispanic and White, 39% to 52% Black	13
Can do as well as others (strongly agree): Hispanic and White, 38% to 49% Black	11
Feel good about self (strongly agree): White, 31% to 63% Black	32
Satisfied with self (strongly agree): Asian and Native American, 32% to 45% Black	13
Family Type	
Feel good about self (strongly agree): father/stepmother, 28% to 42% neither parent	14
Person of worth (strongly agree): neither parent, 36% to 52% father/stepmother	16
Nothing to be proud of (agree): both parents, 12% to 23% neither parent	11
Sex of Student	
Feel good about self (strongly agree): girls, 28%; 45% boys	17
Not feel at all good about self (agree): boys, 34%; 49% girls	15
Feel useless at times (agree): boys 45%; 57% girls	12
Region	
Feel good about self (strongly agree): North Central, 31% to 41% South	10
4-H	
Feel good about self (strongly agree): leavers, 32% to 43% joiners	11
Nothing to be proud of (agree): stayers, 11% to 22% joiners	11

When the items were used as an index of self-concept, differences in the percent in the lowest and highest tertile appeared related to ethnicity, socio-economic status, sex of student and 4-H. (The total respondent group was divided into thirds, tertiles, on their scores on the self-concept and locus of control indices.) Percentages above or below 33% show that some groups had higher percentages and some had lower percentages in the three index tertiles.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Self-concept index, highest tertile: White, 32% to 46% Black	14
Self-concept index, lowest tertile: Black, 22% to 37% Asian and Hispanic	15
Socio-economic Status	
Self-concept index, highest tertile: lowest, 29% to 39% highest SES quartile	10
Self-concept index, lowest tertile: lowest, 28% to 38% highest SES quartile	10

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More (continued)

Sex of Student	
Self-concept index, lowest tertile: boys, 26%; 40% girls	14
Self-concept index, highest tertile: girls, 27%; 40% boys	13
4-H	
Self-concept index, highest tertile: joiners, 27% to 37% leavers/stayers	10
Self-concept index, lowest tertile: leavers, 30% to 43% joiners	13

Perceptions – Most felt others saw them "to some extent" as being a good student, athletic, popular, and important.

About half the students replied 'somewhat' to questions about the image others held of them. The following percentages said that others saw them 'very much' as troublemaker, 5%; popular, 17%; important, 20%; athletic, 27%; good student, 36%.

Substantial differences related to being viewed as a very good student appeared in relation to ethnicity, socio-economic status and family type, but not for sex of student or 4-H. Being seen as being very athletic showed substantial differences related to sex of student, 4-H ethnicity, and socio-economic status. Perception of being viewed as being very popular only showed substantial differences related to ethnicity.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Other students see me as:	
Ethnicity	**PPD**
Very good student, (agree): Hispanic, 32% to 49% Asian	17
Very popular: Asian, 14% to 26% Black	12
Very athletic: Asian and Hispanic, 24% to 34% Black	10
Socio-economic Status	
Very good student: lowest and moderately low, 32% to 44% highest SES quartile	12
Not at all athletic: lowest, 32% to 21% highest SES quartile	11
Family Type	
Very good student: father/stepmother, 27% to 38% both parents	11
Sex of Student	
Not at all a troublemaker: boys 63%; 81% girls	18
Very athletic: girls 19%; 34% boys	15
4-H	
Very athletic: leavers, 24% to 34% joiners	10
Not at all a troublemaker: joiner, 68% to 78% stayers	10

Implications

Adults need to foster the feeling of confidence and that each youngster is equal in value to others. In addition, adults working with youth need to be sensitive to when a youngster may be feeling useless or less than proud of him or herself. Incidents which seem trivial to adults may be heartbreaking to youth of this age. The adult needs to show understanding while helping the teen accept a weakness or problem, and deal with it within the larger perspective of overall value and worth. At the same time adults can discuss with the student what, if anything, can be done concerning how others see them. They can help them recognize behaviors that may be affecting others' views.

Control of Lives – **Although most eighth graders feel they have a good deal of control over their lives, some recognize that luck and chance affect them. Those with lower socio-economic status were more likely to recognize control by outside forces.**

Over a third said that chance and luck were very important in their lives. Over half of those in the lowest socio-economic status quartile as compared with about a fourth of those in the highest saw chance and luck as very important in their lives. However, two-fifths of all eighth graders felt strongly that hard work was more important in success than was good luck. Most, 80%, felt they had enough control over the direction their lives were taking. However, over one in four, 29%, felt that something or someone stopped them when they tried to get ahead. As will be seen in the following table, substantial differences for most items appeared related to socio-economic status, ethnicity, family type and 4-H..

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Chance and luck are very important (agree): White, 34% to 54% Black	20
Something stops me from getting ahead (agree): White, 27% to 41% Native American	14
Good luck (agree): White, 10% to 21% Native American	11
Making plans work (agree): White, 19% to 30% Black	11
Don't control own life (strongly disagree): Asian, 26% to 36% Black	10
Socio-economic Status	
Chance and luck are very important (agree): lowest, 53% to 27% highest SES quartile	26
Chance and luck are very important (disagree): lowest, 14% to 27% highest SES quartile	13
Something stops me from getting ahead (agree): lowest, 38% to 19% highest SES quartile	19
Good luck (strongly disagree): lowest, 35% to 47% highest SES quartile	12
Good luck (agree): lowest, 18% to 7% highest SES quartile	11
Plans hardly ever work out (agree): lowest, 28% to 12% highest SES quartile	16
Plans hardly ever work out (strongly disagree): lowest, 21% to 35% highest SES quartile	14
Family Type	
Chance and luck are very important (agree): both parents, 36% to 50% neither parent	14
Chance and luck are very important (disagree): neither parent, 15% to 25% father and step	10
Something stops me from getting ahead (agree): father only, 27% to 41% neither parent	14
Plans hardly ever work out (agree): both parents, 18% to 29% neither parent	11
4-H	
Chance and luck are very important (agree): leavers, 34% to 53% joiners	19
Something stops me from getting ahead (agree): nevers, 27% to 37% joiners	10
Plans hardly ever work out (disagree strongly): joiners, 23% to 34% stayers	11
Good luck (agree): leavers, 9% to 22% joiners	14
Don't control own life (agree): stayers, 17% to 29% joiners	11

When the items were combined into an index and the percent in various tertiles examined, socio-economic status showed the greatest substantial difference in that both the percent in the highest and in the lowest tertile. Ethnicity showed a difference in relation to the lowest tertile, but not in terms of the highest. Family type did not show substantial differences related to the index. Sex of student did not show substantial differences either related to specific items or to the index, indicating that boys and girls are probably very similar in the way they view their ability to control their own lives.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Locus of Control Index, lowest tertile: White, 30% to 43% Hispanic	13
Socio-economic Status	
Locus of Control Index, lowest tertile: lowest, 45% to 23% highest SES quartile	22
Locus of Control Index, highest tertile: 24% to 43% highest SES quartile	19
4-H	
Locus of control, lowest tertile: leavers, 30% to 43% joiners	13
Locus of control, highest tertile: joiners, 27% to 37% leavers/stayers	10

Implications

It is a challenge to assess the extent to which each youngster feels he or she controls his or her own life. Most have to face things they can't control at different points in their lives, because situations change rapidly and natural disasters and societal calamities occur. Most eighth graders need to see a duality in relation to controlling that which they can control through hard work and planning, yet being able to cope when something big upsets their plans. As they work with parents and peers they need to learn when to direct themselves and when it is appropriate to accept and draw on direction from others.

COMMUNICATION

The NELS:88 study team gave a good deal of attention to communication, although some of the questions concerned the planning of high school programs and, thus, made communication secondary. About a fourth, 26%, of the 336 comparisons related to communication showed substantial differences. Ethnic heritage appeared to have more effect on communication patterns, 65% of the differences were substantial, than did socio-economic status, 38%. Region was the only characteristic not showing any difference of 10 or more percentage points.

Parent and Eighth Grader – **Most parents thought they communicated with their eighth graders on regular basis regarding school experiences and plans for the future. Most eighth graders talked with their parents at least one or more times about school activities, things studied and class, and selecting courses and programs.**

As Viewed By Parents. Three-fourths of the parents said that they regularly talked with their eighth grader about school experiences. Parents were less likely to talk with them regularly about high school plans. Less than half of the parents said they regularly talked about high school plans and only somewhat more than a third said they regularly talked with the eighth grader about plans after high school.

White parents were somewhat more likely to say they regularly discussed school experiences with their eighth grader than were parents of other ethnic backgrounds. However, Black parents were more likely to say that they regularly discussed plans for high school with their eighth graders, 58%. Asian parents were least likely to do so, 42% (White, 45%; Native American, 48%; Hispanic, 53%). The range in percent saying 'not at all' was from 4% of Hispanic parents to 2% of White parents.

White parents were the least likely to regularly discuss plans for after high school, (35%), and Black parents were most likely to do so at 51% (Asian, 37%; Hispanic, 44%; Native American, 45%). The range in percent saying 'not at all' was from 6% of Hispanic and Black parents to 3% of White parents.

In most cases, communication between parents and eighth graders increased as SES increased. The range in terms of regularly talking with eighth graders about school experiences was from 66% of parents in the lowest SES quartile to 89% of those in the highest quartile. The range in regularly discussing high school plans was from 43% of the parents in the lowest SES quartile to 53% of those in the highest quartile. The range in regularly discussing plans after high school was from 33% of those in the lowest SES quartile to 43% in the highest quartile. The range in percent saying 'not at all' was from 8% in the lowest SES quartile to 1% in the highest quartile. Regularly talking with youngsters about school experiences and about plans clearly increased as SES quartile increased within each ethnic group except for the area of plans after high school by Native Americans.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Parents regularly talk to student about:	
School experiences: Asian, 65% to 82% White	17
High school plans: Asian, 42% to 58% Black	16
Plans after high school: White, 35% to 51% Black	16
Socio-economic Status	
Parents regularly talk to student about:	
School experiences: lowest, 66% to 89% highest SES quartile	23
High school plans: lowest, 43% to 53% highest SES quartile	10
Plans after high school: lowest, 33% to 43% highest SES quartile	10
Family Type	
Parents regularly talk to student about:	
School experiences: fathers/stepmother 68% to 82% both parents	14
High school plans: fathers/stepmother, 36% to 48% both parents, mother/stepfather	12
Urbanicity	
Parents regularly talk to student about:	
High school plans: rural, 43% to 53% urban	10

As Viewed by Students. Since school started, 91% of eighth graders said they had talked with their parents about school activities/events (57% three or more times), 88% said they had talked with their parents about things studied in class (52% three or more times), and 86% had talked with their parents about selecting courses and programs. However, they were less likely to have talked with their parents three or more times about selecting courses and school programs (37%).

White youngsters were substantially more likely to talk with their parents three or more times regarding the three topics than were other ethnic groups. Discussing the school with parents three or more times substantially increased as SES increased. Eighth graders living with both natural or adoptive parents were somewhat more likely to discuss school three or more times with their parents than were other types of families. There was little difference between single and stepfamilies with the exception of talking about school activities with their mothers.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Talk with parents about:	
Activities: Native American and Asian, 47% to 60% White	13
Things studied: Hispanic, 43% to 55% White	12
Courses and programs: Native American, 30% to 41% White	11
Socio-economic Status	
Talk with parents about:	
Activities, three or more times: lowest, 44% to 68% highest SES quartile	24
Things studied, three or more times: lowest, 42% to 64% highest SES quartile	22
Courses and programs, three or more times: lowest, 28% to 49% highest SES quartile	21
Courses and programs, never: lowest, 22% to 9% highest SES quartile	13
Things studied, never: lowest, 17% to 6% highest SES quartile	11
Activities, never: lowest, 15% to 5% highest SES quartile	10
Family Type:	
Talk with parents about:	
School experiences: father/stepmother, 68% to 82% both parents	14
Things studied: neither parent, 40% to 54% both parents	14
Courses and programs: neither parent, 27% to 41% both parents	14
Activities: neither parent, 48% to 59% both parents	11
4-H	
Talk with parents about:	
Things studied, three or more times: joiners, 46% to 56% stayers	10

Implications

Many eighth graders appear to communicate with their parents on a regular basis regarding school experiences and plans for the future. It is important that parents, especially those of lower socio-economic status, be in contact with the school and be able to talk with their eighth graders. The NELS study does not look at the extensiveness (three times is not very many) or the quality of the discussion. Many younger teens do not respond extensively when questioned about school by their parents. It is likely that some younger teens want to initiate and control such discussions rather than responding to questioning by their parents. There may be a need for programming with teens and parents/adults on how to communicate with each other (both in talking and really hearing, not just listening).

High School Plans – **Eighth graders were more likely to talk with nonschool sources as they planned their high school program than they were with teachers and guidance counselors. They were most likely to talk frequently with their mothers and with relatives and friends their own age.**

Over half said they had not talked with their teachers, 53%, or a guidance counselor, 64%, about high school planning. However, about nine-tenths of the eighth graders had talked once or twice with their mother and/or with peers about planning their high school programs. Eighth graders were somewhat more likely to have talked about high school plans with their fathers, 74%, than with other adult relatives or friends, 65%.

Black eighth graders were somewhat more likely to have talked about high school plans frequently with their mothers, guidance counselors, teachers, adult relative or friends, and peers than were other ethnic groups. Talking frequently with mothers, fathers, and peers increased as SES increased. Talking with other adults relatives or friends decreased as SES increased. There was little difference in SES related to talking to guidance counselors and teachers.

When socio-economic status was examined within ethnic groups, discussing high school plans frequently with mother and father increased as SES increased within all ethnic groups. There was no clear trend when guidance counselors, teachers, adult relatives or friends, and peers were examined. Girls were more likely than boys to talk with peers and adults other than their parents about their high school plans. Family type differences centered around the extent to which one or the other of the parents was not in the household.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity Discussed high school plans with –	
Mother:	
Three or more times: Asian, 43% to 59% Black	16
Father:	
No times: Asian, 19% to 37% Black	18
Three or more times: Native American, 26% to 36% Asian	10
Adult relative/friend:	
No times: Black, 23% to 38% White	15
Three or more times: Asian and White, 18% to 29% Black	11
Counselor:	
No times: Black, 59% to 69% Hispanic	10
Socio-economic Status Discussed high school plans with –	
Mother:	
Three or more times: lowest, 45% to 58% highest SES quartile	13
Father:	
No times: lowest, 39% to 15% highest SES quartile	24
Three or more times: lowest, 21% to 43% highest SES quartile	22
Adult relative/friend:	
No times: lowest, 30% to 41% highest SES quartile	11
Family Type Discussed high school plans with –	
Mother:	
No times: mother only, 10% to 33% father only	23
Three or more times: father only, 27% to 58% mother only	31
Father:	
No times: father only, 15% to 55% mother only	40
Three or more times: mother only, 15% to 41% father only	26
Adult relative/friend:	
No times: mother only, 27% to 38% both parents	11
Three or more times: both parents, 18% to 29% neither parent	11
Regularly discuss high school plans: father/stepmother, 36% to 48% both parents	12
Sex of Student Discussed high school plans with –	
Adult relatives or friends:	
No times: boys, 40%; 30% girls	10
Peers:	
No times: girls, 8%; 19% boys	11
Three or more times: boys, 36%; 51% girls	15

Implications

The fact that most eighth graders, regardless of characteristics, at the time of the study had talked more with nonschool sources than with guidance counselors and teachers indicates the importance of these other sources in accessing up-to-date information related to choices and decisions involved in planning a high school program. The fact that the mother was more likely to be involved than the father in several situations also puts special emphasis on being sure mothers are aware of the choices to be made. Both of these findings point out the need of earnest cooperation between the school and parents in regard to course selection.

School Decisions – **Eighth graders were somewhat more likely to talk with an adult (other than their parents) about selecting courses and getting information about high school than they were a school counselor or teacher. They were somewhat more likely to talk with teachers about improving current academic work than counselors or other adults.**

Eighth graders were most likely to talk to teachers about improving current academic work, 61%, and least likely to seek information about high school, 42%. They were least likely to ask counselors for help in improving their current school work, 23%, and most likely to ask help in selecting courses, 41%. The percent saying they had talked with some other adult ranged from 49% seeking help in improving current course work to 57% exploring courses to be selected. (Parents were not included in this question.)

Overall, White eighth graders were somewhat less likely and Black eighth graders somewhat more likely to be talking to counselors, teachers, or other adults about selecting courses, high school, and improving current academic work. In general, eighth graders in the lowest SES quartile talked with counselors, teachers, and other adults about the three topics more than did youth in the higher SES quartiles.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Counselor:	
Improving school work: White, 20% to 36% Black	16
High school programs: White, 36% to 50% Black	14
Teacher:	
Improving school work: White, 58% to 71% Black	13
High school programs: Native American, 36% to 52% Black	16
Selecting courses or programs: White, 58% to 71% Black	13
Things studied: Native American, 60% to 72% Black	12
Other Adult:	
Improving school work: White, 47% to 59% Native American	12
High school programs: White, 52% to 62% Black	10
Socio-economic Status	
Counselor:	
Improving school work: lowest, 29% to 18% highest SES quartile	11
Family Type	
Counselor:	
Improving school work: both parents, 20% to 34% living with neither parent	14
4-H	
Counselor:	
Improving school work: leavers, 18% to 32% joiners	14
Things studied: nevers and leavers, 10% to 21% joiners	11

Implications

Most parents and eighth graders appear to communicate to some extent regarding school, homework, activities, and plans for the future. We often are led to believe that young adolescents are uncommunicative and have an adversarial relationship with their parents. This may be true for some but not the majority.

Careers – Eighth graders were less likely to talk to teachers and counselors about future work related topics than they were to talk with other adults.

Fewer then one-fourth of eighth graders talked with teachers (24%) or counselors (21%) about careers and jobs after high school. Almost two thirds of the eighth graders, 63%, said they had talked with some other adult about careers and jobs after high school. Talking with an adult other than school personnel was pervasive regardless of the characteristic examined. Although there was some variation in the extent to which youth talked with counselors and teachers about jobs and careers, it is apparent that relatively few early teens seek out information about jobs and careers from school personnel.

Overall, Black eighth graders were more likely to talk with each of the sources (counselor, teacher, and/or other adult) than were eighth graders of other ethnic groups. As SES increased there was somewhat of a decrease in talking with the three sources about jobs and careers after high school. When ethnicity and SES were combined, with one exception (Native Americans), a higher percent of eighth graders in the lowest SES quartile talked to other adults, teachers, and counselors about jobs and careers than did those in the higher SES quartiles.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity		PPD
Counselor:		
Jobs or careers:	White and Asian, 18% to 35% Black	17
Teacher:		
Jobs or careers:	White, 21% to 35% Black	14
Other Adult:		
Jobs or careers:	Asian, 60% to 72% of Black	12
Socio-economic Status		
Counselor:		
Jobs or careers:	lowest, 26% to 16% highest SES quartile	10
4-H		
Counselor:		
Jobs or careers:	leavers, 17% to 30% joiners	13
Teacher:		
Jobs or careers:	leavers/nevers, 23% to 33% joiners	10

Implications

Adults as well as parents have an opportunity to help youth learn more about the career the adult has chosen. These "inside" pictures help a youngster gain a greater understanding of a variety of careers. These findings emphasize the importance of such adults either being aware of up-to-date information about careers and being able to link eighth graders to current sources. Further, it is important that the youth have someone who will listen to their ideas and provide appropriate feedback regarding their interests.

Problems and Interests – Regardless of characteristic, many early teens need to talk to adult relatives and friends about things which bother or interest them.

Eighth graders were somewhat more likely to talk with other adults than they were teachers and school counselors about discipline problems, alcohol and drug abuse, and personal problems. They were slightly more likely to talk to teachers than other adults and least likely to talk to counselors about things studied in class. Percent of eighth graders talking with various people about personal topics: things studied in class: 11% counselor, 66% teacher, 62% other adults; because of discipline problems: 15% counselor, 23% teacher, 29% other adult; information/counseling on alcohol or drug abuse: 11% counselor, 13% teacher, 18% other adult; counseling on personal problems: 19% counselor, 11% teacher, 37% other adult.

Again, Black eighth graders were somewhat more likely than other ethnic groups to be talking to other adults, teachers, and school counselors about the four topics relating to personal issues. In most cases, the percent of eighth graders talking about personal concerns decreased as SES increased. Boys were somewhat more likely than girls to talk with teachers, counselors, and other adults about studies, discipline problems, and alcohol and drug abuse. Girls, on the other hand, were slightly more likely than boys to talk to teachers, counselors, and other adults about personal problems. In general, those living in a family composition type other than their natural parents were somewhat more likely to talk with teachers, other adults, and counselors about personal concerns.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Counselor:	
Discipline problems: Asian and White, 13% to 25% Black	12
Alcohol or drug abuse: White, 8% to 20% Black	12
Teacher:	
Discipline problems: Asian, 20% to 30% Black	10
Alcohol or drug abuse: White, 10% to 22% Black	12
Other Adult:	
Discipline problems: Asian and White, 27% to 41% Black	14
Alcohol or drug abuse: White, 14% to 29% Black	15
Personal problems: White and Asian, 34% to 47% Black	13
Socio-economic Status	
Counselor:	
Discipline problems: lowest, 22% to 10% highest SES quartile	12
Teacher:	
Alcohol or drug abuse: lowest, 18% to 8% highest SES quartile	10
Other adult:	
Discipline problems: lowest, 37% to 22% highest SES quartile	15
Alcohol or drug abuse: lowest, 26% to 12% highest SES quartile	14
Family Type	
Counselor:	
Personal problems: both parents, 15% to 29% neither parent	14
Other adult:	
Discipline problems: both parents, 26% to 42% father/stepmother	16
Personal problems: both parents, 33% to 45% neither parent	12
Sex of Student	
Teacher:	
Discipline problems: boys 28%; 17% girls	11
Other adult:	
Personal problems: boys 32%; 42% girls	10
4-H	
Counselor:	
Discipline problems: stayers, 11% to 26% joiners	15
Alcohol or drug abuse: leavers, 8% to 20% joiners	12
Teacher:	
Discipline problems: stayers, 18% to 31% joiners	13
Alcohol or drug abuse: leavers, 10% to 22% joiners	12
Other adult:	
Alcohol or drug abuse: nevers and stayers, 16% to 30% joiners	14
Personal problems: nevers, 35% to 45% joiners	10
Jobs and careers: leavers, 60% to 72% joiners	12

Implications

Professionals and volunteers working with youth in nonschool activities can be very helpful to youth by taking time to listen and to talk (but not to preach) to them.

Comparison – Eighth graders not only were more likely to have talked with adults other than school personnel for most specific topics, but they were also more likely to have talked about more of the topics with other adults (parents excluded) than they were to have talked about them with counselors and teachers.

All eighth graders indicated discussing at least one of the eight topics with the school counselor and an adult other than a counselor, teacher, or parent. However, over one in ten said they had not discussed any of the topics with a teacher. Almost two-thirds of the eighth graders said they had talked with an adult other than a counselor, teacher, or parent about five or more of the seven topics. This compares with 21% having talked with a counselor and 39% saying they had talked with a teacher about five or more of the topics. In general, those with ethnic heritages other than White were more likely to be talking to school personnel and other adults than were White youngsters. Talking to adults and school personnel tended to decrease as socio-economic status increased.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Counselor:	
7-8 topics: White, 6% to 17% Black	11
1-2 topics: Black, 36% to 55% White	19
Teacher:	
7-8 topics: White, 8% to 22% Black	14
Other Adult:	
7-8 topics: White, 26% to 40% Black	14
Socio-economic Status	
Teacher:	
7-8: lowest, 16% to 6% highest SES quartile	10
Other Adult:	
7-8 topics: lowest, 35% to 25% highest SES quartile	10
Family Type	
Counselor:	
1-2 topics: neither parent, 42% to 54% both parents	12
Other adult:	
7-8 topics: both parents, 27% to 38% neither parent	11
4-H Counselor:	
1-2 topics: joiners, 41% to 57% leavers	16
7-8 topics: leavers, 4% to 16% joiners	12
Teacher:	
7-8 topics: three groups, 9% to 19% joiners	10
Other Adult	
7-8 topics: stayers, 27% to 40% joiners	13

Implications

The eighth grade appears to be a time when adolescents are seeking out adults other than their parents for information and guidance. Those working with out-of-school programs must be prepared, and ready to listen and advise youth about options open to them in their personal lives, school and the future. Many adults working with informal youth programs may not have much knowledge of the local school situation. Being informed and aware of the school may be useful in assisting youth to make plans for the future.

The findings also challenge.the assumption that young people only rely on their peers for advice. For most eighth graders, peers may only be one of several advice sources. It would appear that the younger teen is part of at least four different cultures. Teens must adjust communication appropriately within the peer culture, the family culture, the school culture, and cultures in which they have contact with adults and other youth such as church and nonschool programs. It is very possible that each culture expects somewhat different communication styles on the part of the eighth grader.

Youth program personnel might serve as a community advocate to provide a variety of opportunities for youth to interact with adults. Examples might be mentor programs, community centers, clubs, sports activities and others. School systems might provide resources to enable eighth graders to talk about programs. In addition, keeping parents and community members informed about what is going on in the school would provide them with up-to-date information about school issues.

HEALTH RISKS

The eighth grade survey only asked about cigarette smoking. The percent of eighth graders indicating that they smoked was considerably less than ten percent. It is not surprising that none of the seven variables showed a difference of 10 or more percentage points in the percent smoking cigarettes. The 10th grade follow-up study will include more detail on other health risks such as alcohol and drugs.

Smoking – Relatively few eighth graders admit to smoking cigarettes. A few smoke a great number of cigarettes.

Ninety-three percent of the eighth graders said they did not smoke. Among the 7% who said they did smoke, 4% smoked five or fewer cigarettes a day. When responses were examined by the seven variables, no examination showed a difference of 10 or more percentage points. Some youngsters in all groups smoked cigarettes by the time they were in eighth grade, but most did not. The range in percent smoking was from 2% of Black eighth graders to 10% of those of Native American heritage. The range was from 10% of those in the lowest SES to 4% of those in the highest SES quartile saying they smoked; moderately low and moderately high were at 7%. When smoking by SES quartiles was examined within ethnicity, there was a clear decrease as socio-economic status increased for Whites and Native Americans. SES did not seem to make a difference among Blacks and made little difference for Hispanics and Asians.

Implications

The growing medical evidence of the health risks caused by smoking and by living closely with others who smoke makes it imperative that both those developing programs for youth and those developing programs for parents discourage smoking. Adults working with youth can encourage youth/youth groups to be leaders in their community in discouraging smoking both personally and as a group activity.

SCHOOL

Information related to the interaction of eighth graders and schools is divided into clusters. First, the schools are described. It was not possible to analyze this information by the seven variables. Then the eighth graders' opinions about their schools will be presented, followed by school success and school risk, orientation toward school and school behavior.

Ethnicity showed the greatest number of substantial (10 percentage points or more) differences related to school items. Somewhat over a fourth, 28%, of all comparisons yielded substantial differences, but over half of the comparisons relating to ethnicity yielded substantial differences.

KIND OF SCHOOL

It was not possible to examine school characteristics by the seven variables used in the study. However, we are including a description so that you have some idea of the extent of diversity among the schools.

Diversity – Most eighth graders attended a large public school. Most of the schools were attended by some ethnic minorities thus providing an opportunity for eighth graders to get to know students of other cultures.

All except 12% of the schools in the study were public schools (8% Catholic, 3% other religions, 1% private, not religious).

Although the majority of schools were middle or junior high schools, there were a variety of combinations: 6th through 8th, 27%; 7th through 8th, 20%; 7th through 9th or 8th through 9th, 17%; preschool or kindergarten through 8th grade, 15%; 6th or 7th grade through 12th grade, 8%; 3rd or 4th through 8th grade, 7%; preschool or kindergarten through 12th grade, 4%.

Over half of the schools had at least 600 students (including 16% that had more than 1,000 students). About a fourth had fewer than 400 students in the whole system (including 5% that had fewer than 200 students in the whole school).

Over two-thirds of the schools in the study enrolled more than 100 eighth graders. The range in enrollment was from 16% of the schools having fewer than 50 eighth graders to 13% of the schools having more than 400 eighth graders.

Most schools today have a diverse student body. Only 13% of the schools in the study reported no students from the ethnic heritages currently considered by society as minorities. At the other extreme, 8% indicated that more than 90% of the students were from ethnic minority families.

Half or more of the schools reported having at least 1% of the student body of a Black, Asian, or Hispanic heritage. When one looked at the extent to which schools had a least one student of a particular ethnic background, the percentages indicated the following: Black, 70%; Hispanic, 57%; Asian, 54% and Native American, 21%. Fewer than half indicated having at least one teacher of these heritages. Almost one-half (48%) of the schools had at least one teacher of Black heritage. The percentages for the other heritages were Hispanic, 28%, Asian, 12%, and Native American, 8%.

Implications

Large and diverse schools increase teens' interaction with peers of different backgrounds. They also can be so big that some teens have difficulty making friends. Usually there are sufficient numbers of 14-and 15-year-olds in a school system to support several different nonschool programs.

OPINIONS ABOUT SCHOOL

Ethnicity showed more substantial differences, 58%, related to opinions about schools than did the other variables. Family type was next but only showed 15% of the comparisons as substantial. Only 15% of the socio-economic status comparisons yielded substantial differences. None of the comparisons related to region showed substantial differences.

Safety – Schools differed greatly in the extent to which they provided a safe climate for students. Students may also differ in what they view as a safe climate. Personal safety appeared to be a concern to a number of students. In 1988, drugs for sale in school was a minor problem.

Two of five students felt their learning had been disrupted by other students' problems and activities. Three-fourths of eighth graders indicated physical fights among students was somewhat of a serious

problem. Robbery, vandalism, and use of alcohol were minor problems. However, most students felt that these problems existed in their schools to some extent.

About half of the eighth graders have had something stolen from them at school. About a fourth said they had been threatened with hurt at school. Slightly less than half of the students indicated the use of illegal drugs and possession of weapons were a problem in their school. However, only 14% thought use of illegal drugs and 11% thought weapons were a serious problem at their school. Only a few, 10%, said they had been offered drugs for purchase at school.

Urban eighth graders were only slightly more likely (less than 10 percentage points difference in the range) to see these problems and feel that their schooling was disrupted because of them than were suburban and rural youth. The problems were pervasive across regions and kinds of communities.

Eighth graders other than Whites were more likely to feel unsafe and that their learning was disrupted. However, even one in ten White youngsters felt unsafe and over a third felt that other students disrupted their learning. At the other extreme, among Black eighth graders, almost one in five felt unsafe and over half felt that their learning was disrupted.

The percent feeling unsafe and/or that their schooling was disrupted decreased as SES increased. However, the majority of those in the lowest SES quartile felt safe and about half did not feel their learning was disrupted, while among the highest SES quartile some did not feel safe and about a third felt their learning had been disrupted.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Learning disrupted: White, 36% to 55% Black	19
Alcohol not a problem in school: Native American, 42% to 57% Black	15
Offered drugs for purchase at school: Asian, 5% to 16% Native American	11
Drugs not a problem at school: Native American, 49% to 60% Black	11
School fights a serious problem: White, 15% to 26% Black	11
Family Type	
Threatened with hurt at school: both parents, 26% to 37% father/stepmother	11
Robbery not a problem: mother/stepfather 39% to 49% neither parent	10
Sex of Student	
Threatened with hurt at school: girls, 23%; 33% boys	10
Region	
Weapons not a problem: South, 49% to 59% North Central	10
4-H	
Learning disrupted: leavers, 38% to 54% joiners	16

Implications

Safe school environment is the responsibility of the community and families as well as the school system. Nonschool youth programs can encourage community concern in finding ways to improve safety at school. Some of the dangers, especially from weapons and drugs, relate to activities in the adult population in the community. Nonschool programs can also help youth to develop positive ways of preventing encounters or of dealing with encounters.

The fact that Whites were less likely to be concerned than others may relate to a variety of factors. For example, it may rest in the socio-economic imbalance among ethnic groups. Or it may rest in views related to the dominant culture.

Those involved in nonschool programs for this age group must be alert to insure that the threats in the school environment do not automatically carry over into the nonschool environment programs.

Courtesy – Other disruptions to schoolwork came from absence, tardiness, and lack of courtesy. Tardiness and absenteeism were problems in some schools. Most students did not feel that physical or verbal abuse of teachers was a problem.

Many eighth graders indicated student tardiness or absenteeism were somewhat of a problem in their schools. While only 12% said tardiness and/or absenteeism was a serious problem, a little over a fourth said they were a moderate problem. Fewer eighth graders thought that cutting class was a problem at their school. About a third thought it was a serious or moderate problem, a fourth said it was a minor problem, and about 40% said it was not a problem.

Verbal abuse of teachers was not seen as a problem by almost half, 45%, a minor problem by 27%, a moderate problem, 14%, a serious problem by 14%. However, only 21% thought that physical abuse of teachers posed a problem at their school. Somewhat less than one in ten thought that physical abuse of teachers was a serious problem.

There were differences within ethnic groups in terms of whether or not something was viewed as a problem. There was less difference across ethnic groups in terms of the percent saying that something was not a problem. A higher percentage of ethnic minorities were likely to view something as a problem than was the White majority.

As socio-economic quartile increased eighth graders were less likely to say that something was not a problem. However, they were also less likely to say that it was a serious problem.

Over half thought students who misbehaved got away with it. White students were slightly less likely to think that students got away with misbehaving than were other students. There were no substantial differences related to socio-economic status, region, or urbanicity.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Absenteeism a serious problem: White, 9% to 23% Black	14
Tardiness a serious problem: White, 9% to 22% Black	13
Cutting class a serious problem: White, 12% to 25% Black	13
Physical abuse of teachers not a problem: Native American, 70% to 81% White	11
Verbal abuse of teachers not a problem: White, 45% to 55% Black	10
Socio-economic Status	
Verbal abuse of teachers not a problem: lowest, 55% to 41% highest SES quartile	14
Absenteeism a serious problem: lowest, 17% to 7% highest SES quartile	10
Family Type	
Absenteeism a serious problem: both parents and father only, 10% to 22% neither parent	12
4-H	
Tardiness a serious problem: leavers, 9% to 19% joiners	10

Implications

The pattern of tardiness and absenteeism is prevalent regardless of location and student body makeup. This pattern may carry through to student involvement in informal nonschool activities. Those working with these youth groups need to reinforce the importance of being on time and attending when a commitment has been made to a program.

Positive Views – Although there were problems, most students thought there was a good relationship between the teachers and students at their school. Most thought there was real school spirit, rules for behavior were strict, and discipline was fair.

About three-fourths of students thought the teaching at their school was good and the teachers were interested in the students. About two-thirds thought the students got along well with teachers.

There were differences related to ethnicity. The differences were greater related to opinions about relationships between teachers and students than to opinions about good teaching. Asian eighth graders were more likely to feel teaching was good than were others.

Slightly more than two-thirds of eighth graders thought there was real school spirit, rules for behavior were strict, and discipline was fair. About 30% disagreed which indicates there were a number of students who think their school did not have school spirit, strict behavior, or fairness in discipline.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Students get along well with teachers: Black, 60% to 73% Asian	13
Family Type	
Discipline is fair: both parents, 60% to 70% father only	10
4-H	
School spirit: nevers, 68% to 80% stayers	12
Discipline is fair: joiners, 62% to 73% stayers	11

Implications

Some youngsters may find rules and discipline unfair. This is especially true for those whose parents have lower economic status and for those who are from nondominant ethnic groups. When there is evidence of unfairness, some youngsters may need the help of an advocate in dealing with unfair situations.

Respect from teachers – Eighth graders were sensitive to whether adults praised their work, didn't put them down, and listened to them. Although most felt that teachers gave them appropriate respect, about a third saw problems in how they had been treated by teachers.

Slightly more than one-third of students disagree or strongly disagreed with a statement regarding teachers praising efforts when they work hard on school work . About a fifth of students felt put down by teachers in class. About one-third of students disagreed or strongly disagreed with a statement regarding teachers really listening to what they had to say.

Slightly more than half of the students felt that teachers both praised hard work and did not put them down. Slightly more than half also felt that their teachers both listened to them and praised them when they worked hard. More, almost 60%, felt their teachers both listened and did not put them down.

About one in five of the eighth graders felt that their teachers neither listened to them nor praised their efforts. One in ten felt their teachers put them down and did not listen, or put them down and did not praise them.

White eighth graders were somewhat more likely to feel teachers praised their efforts when they worked hard than were youngsters of other ethnic heritages. Black eighth graders were least likely to feel that teachers praised their efforts. The response of White students was at least 10 percentage points higher than that of Blacks, Hispanics, or Asians.

Eighth graders of Native American heritage were most likely to feel their teachers put them down and youth of Asian heritage were least likely to feel this way. Hispanics, Blacks, and Whites were very similar in their response to this question. Those of Native American heritage were also most likely, and those of Asian heritage were least likely to feel that their teachers did not listen to them.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Felt teachers put them down: Asian, 17% to 31% Native American	14
Felt teachers do not listen to them: Asian, 25% to 38% Native American	13
Felt got along well with teacher: Black, 60% to 73% Asian	13
Felt teachers praised efforts: Black, 28% to 40% White	12
4-H	
Felt teachers put them down: nevers, 20% to 30% joiners	10

There was a relationship between feeling respected and grades for some students, but not for all of them. The range was from 28% of the A students and 46% of the below-C students feeling that teachers did not praise their efforts when they worked hard. The range saying that teachers put them down was from 12% of the A students to 27% who reported grades of below a C. The range in relation to teachers not really listening was from 20% of the A students to 39% of the below C students.

Implications

Adults working with teens need to be sensitive to their feelings, and remember that praise, being listened to, and respect as are important to youth as for adults. Special attention to rapport and relationships may be needed when working with this age. Some youngsters are supersensitive and need the support provided when adults genuinely respect and are interested in them.

Some teachers forget that they are there to help youngsters learn and concentrate on the subject matter rather than on individual students. Likewise, some of the staff working with nonschool programs concentrate on the program rather than on responding to and helping the diverse individuals who take part in the program.

This is one of the few instances in this study where ethnic differences showed more strongly than socio-economic differences. Both teachers' reactions to different ethnic groups and various cultures perception of or sensitivity to responses from teachers may affect these answers. Those working with youth need to understand how each individual is likely to respond to an authority figure and to find ways of showing each individual that he or she counts and is respected.

SCHOOL SUCCESS

Ethnicity, 86%, showed more substantial differences than did socio-economic status, 79%, or family type, 66%. Region showed no differences of 10 or more percentage points.

Range in Ability – Slightly more eighth graders were in a program for gifted and talented than had been held back a grade in school.

Almost one in every five eighth graders was in a program for the gifted and talented. Somewhat fewer than were in a gifted and talented program had been held back in school, 16%. First grade was most often repeated. Some had repeated more than one grade.

Note: Gifted programs and repeating grades are not the same dimension for measuring ability. Although being held back a grade may indicate less giftedness, it may also mean that the ability is there, but at some point the child was unready to perform well in school. Or, as this data seems to indicate, the child may have had insufficient background to enter and hold one's own in a school oriented toward middle class families.

Ethnicity and socio-economic status was related to both excelling and having been held back a grade. Participation in a gifted program increased and having been held back a grade decreased as socio-economic status increased. Youth of Asian and Black heritage were more likely to be in gifted programs than were youth from other heritages.

Eighth graders of Black and Hispanic heritage were most likely and those of Asian heritage were least likely to have been held back a grade. With one exception (Native American talented and gifted) there was a clear and marked trend within each ethnic group for the percentage of youth who were in talented and gifted programs to increase and the percentage that had been held back a grade to decrease as SES quartile increased. The differences between high and low SES quartiles were greater for being held back a grade than for being in gifted and talented programs. The greatest difference in relation to SES effect on participation in gifted and talented programs appeared for the White eighth graders where the range was from 10% of the lowest SES eighth graders to 29% of those in the highest SES quartile. The greatest range in relation to SES relationship to being held back a grade appeared for youngsters of Native American heritage. The range was from 41% of those from the lowest SES quartile to 8% of those from the highest SES quartile. The range for Black youngsters was also higher than the range for White youngsters. Over a third, 36%, of the Black youth in the lowest SES quartile had been held back a grade as compared to one in ten, 10%, of those in the highest SES quartile. Among White eighth graders, the range was from 30% of those in the lowest SES quartile to 8% of those in the highest quartile.

Youth living with both natural parents were least likely to have been held back a grade sometime in school and those living with someone other than their natural parents were most likely to have been held back. Children living in single-parent homes in the eighth grade were as likely to be in gifted program and no more likely to have been held back than were those who lived with one natural parent and a stepparent.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
In gifted and talented programs: Native American, 15% to 31% Asian	16
Held back a grade: Asian, 11% to 26% Black	15
Socio-economic Status	
In gifted and talented programs: lowest, 14% to 29% highest SES quartile	15
Held back a grade: lowest, 31% to 8% highest SES quartile	23
Family Type	
Held back a grade: both parents, 14% to 32% neither parent	18
4-H	
Held back a grade: nevers, 17% to 29% joiners	12

Implications

The marked relationship to socio-economic status is both disturbing and encouraging. It is disturbing to think that the socio-economic background of the family makes so much difference in the school achievement of children. It is encouraging in that this is a factor which can be overcome.

Programs such as Head Start need to be continued and expanded so that all youngsters, regardless of ethnicity and/or socio-economic status have the opportunity to excel to the best of their ability. Those working with nonschool programs for younger children can do much to help those from lower socio-economic families gain the kinds of skills needed to make the most of their interests and talents.

The finding that youth of all ethnic heritages have the ability needed to take part in gifted and talented programs should receive more attention to counteract some stereotyping of some ethnic groups as less able than Whites.

Overall – Socio-economic status also showed a clear relationship to school grades and NELS test scores.

Grades. Almost half of the 8th graders reported an overall grade of B or BC. About one in 10 reported grades of straight A. About one in ten reported grades of less than C.

There was a definite difference in grades related to ethnicity, socio-economic status, and family type. Differences in grades by different ethnic groups was much more pronounced in relation to top grades (straight A) than in relation to grades below C. The range in terms of the percent reporting A grades was from 2% of Native Americans to 21% of the eighth graders with an Asian heritage. There was also a marked difference between the percent of Whites earning straight A's, 12%, and Blacks, 5%, or Hispanics, 5%.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Reporting A grades overall: Native American, 2% to 21% Asian	19
Socio-economic Status	
Straight-A: lowest, 4% to 20% highest SES quartile	16
D or below: lowest, 18% to 4% highest SES quartile	14

Socio-economic status was also clearly related to grades earned within each of the ethnic groups. In terms of top grades, the greatest range according to socio-economic quartile appeared for the youth of Asian heritage and for Whites. Among the Asian youth, 14%, 15%, and 16% of the lowest three quartiles earned straight A's in comparison tc 32% of the top socio-economic quartile. Among the White eighth graders, the range was from 4% of those in the lowest SES quartile to 20% of those in the highest quartile. The ranges in relation to the percent earning top grades were much flatter for Hispanics, 5% to 8%; Blacks, 3% to 12%; and Native Americans 0% to 3%.

However, ethnicity was also a factor. When the socio-economic quartile was held constant, the range in top grades across ethnic groups in the lowest quartile was from 0% of the eighth graders of Native American heritage to 14% of the youth of Asian heritage. Across the top SES quartile, the range was from 3% of the Native Americans earning top grades to 32% of the youth of Asian heritage earning top grades.

Overall NELS test score. The whole group of students was divided into quartiles based upon how they scored on tests in four areas included by the NELS team. There were definite differences related to ethnicity. Almost half of the Black eighth graders were in the lowest quartile and only 7% were in the top quartile. Whites had the fewest in the lowest percentile, but Asians showed the highest percent in the highest quartile.

There were an even more dramatic difference in test scores according to SES quartile. However, even with the dramatic difference, some eighth graders in the lowest SES quartile had high test scores and some eighth graders in the top SES quartile had low test scores. When the combined scores on the NELS test

battery was examined, the range was from 7% of those in the lowest SES quartile and to 48% of those in the highest SES quartile placing in the top test quartile. The range in percent placing in the lowest quartile on the battery of tests was from 45% of the eighth graders in the lowest SES quartile to 9% of those in the highest SES quartile.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Overrall NELS test score, lowest: White, 18% to 49% Black	31
Overall NELS test score, highest: Black, 7% to 36% Asian	29
Socio-economic Status	
Overall NELS test score, highest: lowest, 7% to 48% highest SES quartile	41
Overall NELS test score, lowest: lowest, 45% to 9% highest SES quartile	36
Family Type	
Overall NELS test score, lowest: both parents, 21% to 41% neither parent	20
Overall NELS test score, highest: neither parent, 10% to 29% both parents	19
Urbanitiicy	
Overall NELS test score, lowest: suburban, 21% to 32% urban	11
4-H	
Overall NELS test score, lowest: leavers, 18% to 46% joiners	28
Overall NELS test score, highest: joiners, 10% to 32% leavers	22

Implications

It is important for those working with youth within and outside of the school system to attempt to help both children and their parents overcome the deficiencies related to background for school. Additionally, all need to work together to be sure that school requirement, tests, and grading are not unduly biased against the less dominant cultural groups.

Specific Subjects – **Some students in all ethnic groups and all SES quartiles earned very good grades and/or scored well on the NELS test, and some earned poor grades and/or scored poorly in academic subjects. However, in general those with higher socio-economic status showed higher scores and better grades. Youth of Asian heritage were more likely to score higher and have a higher percentage earning top grades than were Whites and others.**

There is considerable pressure on school systems today to help students increase their ability in four basic subject areas - English, Math, Science, and Social Studies. The NELS: 88 survey gave considerable attention to these areas.

Grades. Many eighth graders, 63% to 69%, indicated they earned mostly A's or B's in the four basic subjects of English, Math, Science, and Social Studies.

There were substantial differences in terms of grades earned in relation to SES quartile. Grades improved as SES quartile increased in all four of the basic subjects. There were also ethnic differences in grades. In each subject Asians showed the highest percentage of A grades and Native Americans showed the lowest percentage.

Grades were related to socio-economic status within ethnic groups. There were often marked differences between lowest and highest SES quartile. Such differences were especially clear for Whites. For all subgroups the percent receiving grades of D or below decreased as SES quartile increased. For many ethnic groups the percent receiving A's increased as SES quartile increased.

Girls were somewhat more likely than boys to earn higher grades in all four courses. However, the only substantial difference appeared in relation to English.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Mostly A's	
Science: Native American, 14% to 43% Asian	29
Social Studies: Native American, 17% to 44% Asian	27
Mathematics: Native American, 27% to 49% Asian	22
English: Native American, 24% to 45% Asian	21
D or below	
Science: Asian, 7% to 19% Native American	12
Mathematics: Asian, 5% to 15% Native American	10
Socio-economic Status	
Mostly A's	
Science: lowest, 18% to 44% highest SES quartile	26
Social Studies: lowest, 18% to 46% highest SES quartile	28
Mathematics: lowest, 27% to 42% highest SES quartile	15
English: lowest, 22% to 45% highest SES quartile	23
D or below	
Social Studies: lowest, 20% to 4% highest SES quartile	16
Mathematics: lowest, 14% to 4% highest SES quartile	10
Family Type	
Mostly A's	
Science: neither parent, 19% to 33% both parents	14
Social studies: neither parent, 21% to 35% both parents	14
Mathematics: neither parent, 25% to 36% both parents	11
English: father/stepmother, 24% to 35% both parents	11
Sex of Student	
Mostly A's in English: boys 25%; 39% girls	14
4-H	
Mostly A's	
English: joiners, 28% to 40% leavers	12
Science: joiners, 24% to 36% stayers	12
Social Studies: joiners, 26% to 38% stayers	12

Test Scores. Asian youngsters usually had the highest percentage in the highest quartile test. Black youngsters usually showed the highest percentage in the lowest quartile on the tests. White eighth graders usually showed the smallest percentage in the lowest quartile.

The difference - fewer of those from the lowest SES quartile scoring in the top quartile on the NELS test, and more scoring in the lowest quartile on the test - remained about the same for all four subject areas areas. There were substantial differences in scores related to SES in each ethnic group.

In the generation represented by these 1988 eighth graders, girls seemed to be doing as well as boys in Math and Science. Somewhat more boys placed in the lowest quartile over all and in the lowest reading quartile than did girls. About the same percentage of boys and girls placed in the lowest quartile in science and social studies. However, more boys than girls placed in the highest quartile in the tests of these two subjects but the differences were not substantial.

The range in terms of differences in relation to family type was always between those living with both parents and those living with someone other than their parents. Students living with only one parent were equally likely to be in the top test quartile as were those living with one parent and a stepparent or other guardian. There was a difference related to urbanicity for the math and science test scores. Urban youngsters had a higher percentage in the lowest test quartile.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Test score quartile:	
Mathematics, lowest: Asian and White, 18% to 49% Black	31
Mathematics, highest: Black, 7% to 40% Asian	33
Science, lowest: White, 19% to 48% Black	29
Science, highest: Black, 6% to 31% Asian	25
Reading, lowest: White, 20% to 45% Black and Native American	25
Reading, highest: Native American, 7% to 30% Asian and White	23
Social Studies, lowest: White, 20% to 40% Black	20
Social Studies, highest: Native American, 8% to 33% Asian	25
Socio-economic Status	
Test Score quartile:	
Mathematics, lowest: lowest, 44% to 9% highest SES quartile	35
Mathematics, highest: lowest, 8% to 49% highest SES quartile	41
Science, lowest: lowest, 42% to 11% highest SES quartile	31
Science, highest: lowest, 9% to 43% highest SES quartile	34
Reading, lowest: lowest, 48% to 11% highest SES quartile	37
Reading, highest: lowest, 8% to 46% highest SES quartile	38
Social Studies, lowest: lowest, 44% to 10% highest SES quartile	34
Social Studies, highest: lowest, 9% to 45% highest SES quartile	36
Family Type	
Test Score quartile:	
Mathematics, lowest: both parents, 21% to 41% neither parent	20
Mathematics, highest: neither parent, 11% to 30% both parents	19
Science, lowest: both parents, 22% to 44% neither parent	22
Science, highest: neither parent, 13% to 28% both parents	15
Reading lowest: both parents, 22% to 39% neither parent	17
Reading, highest: neither parent, 13% to 29% both parents	16
Social Studies, lowest: both parents, 22% to 46% neither parent	24
Social studies, highest: neither parent, 13% to 27% both parents	14
Urbanicity	
Test scores quartile:	
Mathematics, lowest: suburban, 22% to 32% urban	11
Science, lowest: suburban, 22% to 32% urban	11
4-H	
Test score quartile:	
Mathematics, lowest: leavers, 18% to 47% joiners	29
Mathematics, highest: joiners, 13% to 30% leavers	17
Science, lowest: leavers, 19% to 46% joiners	27
Science, highest: joiners, 13% to 30% leavers	17
Reading, lowest: leavers, 19% to 45% joiners	26
Reading, highest: joiners, 13% to 33% leavers	20
Social Studies, lowest: leavers, 19% to 46% joiners	27
Social Studies, highest: joiners, 13% to 29% leavers	16

Implications

Some youth programs ignore what is happening in the school system. In one respect, that of letting each youngster excel on his or her own merits, removing the nonschool youth program from any consideration of school performance is a good one. When formal education is doing a good job with most youngsters, nonschool programs can turn their attention to other things. However, recently there has been considerable criticism of the formal school system. When this is the case, nonschool youth programs may need to consider how such programs can help youngsters excel in school and on national tests.

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We did not explore why there were differences in school attainment related to ethnicity. There may be several possible reasons. (1) Cultural groups may differ in the amount of emphasis placed on doing well in school. (2) There may be considerable difference in the kinds of skills needed in testing built up by various cultural groups. (3) There is also a possibility that test items and grading systems may be somewhat biased toward the majority culture.

Youngsters from lower socio-economic quartiles and from some ethnic heritages are clearly at a disadvantage related to tests and grading systems. Those working with informal youth groups may want to consider how the content in and activities of such programs can help those with low grades improve their abilities to deal with their school work and the tests given at school. Nonschool programs need to incorporate the kinds of things which help youngsters excel in school in nonthreatening, fun ways rather than copying the poorer of the instructional techniques used in school.

Much has been said in recent times about girls falling behind in math and science. This data showed that at least until they reached the eighth grade, girls were as able to excel in these subjects as boys.

Teacher Ratings – Most teachers rated eighth graders as doing well. Very few were viewed by their teachers as being passive and withdrawn. However, the teachers said that about one-fourth of the eighth graders included in this study consistently worked below their ability and one-fifth were rated as inattentive.

Almost three-fourths of the teachers rated their eighth grade students as performing up to ability. Eighty percent said that the eighth graders in the sample were attentive in class and completed their homework. Almost 90% said that the eighth graders they rated were not disruptive to the class. Very few saw the students whom they worked with as being exceptionally passive and withdrawn.

Teachers indicated about one-fourth of eighth graders consistently performed below their ability. Teachers were more likely to report boys were performing below their ability than were girls. About one-fifth of the eighth graders were rated as consistently inattentive in class. Fewer eighth graders were frequently disruptive (13%), or exceptionally passive and withdrawn (4%). One in ten was rated as frequently absent (11%), frequently tardy (6%), and about one-fifth were rated as rarely completing their homework .

There was a strong relationship between grades and inappropriate behavior in school. A few straight A students, 3% or 4%, were rated by one or both teachers as showing some negative behaviors. Some of the students, a third or more, with grades below C were not given negative ratings. However, there was a clear relationship between grades and teachers ratings. For example, of those earning less than a C grade, 65% were rated as performing below ability and 52% were rated inattentive. Over a fourth, 27%, were rated as disruptive. A higher percentage of those with low grades, 27%, were rated as passive or withdrawn.

Although some youngsters in the top socio-economic (SES) quartile were rated as showing some of the negative behavior, the percent receiving low ratings decreased as SES quartile increased. The range was narrower in terms of disruptive behavior, 17% in the lowest quartile to 9% in the highest quartile. The range was least in relation to students being rated passive and withdrawn, from 12% in the lowest quartile to 6% in the highest quartile. However, the majority of students in the lowest SES quartile did not receive

negative ratings. The percent in the lowest quartile receiving negative ratings ranged from 12% being rated as passive and withdrawn to 37% performing below their ability. The range for the highest SES quartile was from 6% rated as passive or withdrawn to 17% rated as performing below ability.

Although some youth of Asian heritage were rated as showing each of the negative behaviors, the percentage for this group was usually lower than for other ethnic groups. A higher percentage of the other three ethnic groups which are considered minorities in the national population showed higher levels of negative ratings than did the White eighth graders.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Teachers rated eighth grader as:	
Performs below ability: Asian, 17% to 39% Native American	22
Inattentive: Asian, 14% to 34% Native American	20
Rarely completes homework: Asian, 13% to 33% Native American	20
Frequently absent: Asian, 5% to 22% Native American	17
Disruptive: Asian, 8% to 22% Black	14
Frequently tardy: Asian and White, 4% to 14% Native American	10
Socio-economic Status	
Teachers rated eighth grader as:	
Performs below ability: lowest, 37% to 17% highest SES quartile	20
Inattentive: lowest, 29% to 17% highest SES quartile	12
Rarely completes homework: lowest, 30% to 12% highest SES quartile	18
Frequently absent: lowest, 18% to 6% highest SES quartile	12
Family Type	
Teachers rated eighth grader as:	
Performs below ability: both parents, 23% to 39% neither parent	16
Inattentive: both parents, 18% to 33% neither parent	15
Rarely completes homework: both parents, 17% to 33% neither parent	16
Frequently disruptive: both parents, 11% to 21% neither parent	10
Sex of Student	
Teachers rated eighth grader as:	
Performs below ability: girls, 21%; 33% boys	12
Inattentive: girls, 16%; 27% boys	11
Rarely completes homework: girls, 14%; 28% boys	14
Frequently disruptive: girls, 7%; 19% boys	12
4-H	
Teachers rated eighth grader as:	
Rarely completes homework: leavers/stayers, 15% to 31% joiners	16
Performs below ability: stayers, 21% to 36% joiners	15
Inattentive: leavers and stayers, 18% to 32% joiners	14
Frequently disruptive: leavers, 10% to 20% joiners	10

Implications

The findings suggest that the majority of youth of this age get along in school situations. Some situations might require special efforts to engage their interest or keep them performing at the level of their ability. Adults working with youth of diverse backgrounds must understand the possible effect of cultural background, both of the teacher/leader and of the student/participant on interpreting and improving school performance.

SCHOOL RISK INDICATORS

We constructed a count of factors which might indicate that the eighth grader was likely to be in trouble in school unless he or she changed behavior or attitude. Our assumption in focusing on school related indicators is that being successful in school is of high importance to the success in life of the early teen. Thus, a teen who is not succeeding in school is more likely to be at risk in other areas of his or her life.

Our count included four attitudinal items and eleven behavioral items. The table below gives the percent of all respondents with each characteristic.

Sixteen Items in the School Risk Index

	% of all 8th graders
Attitude	
Do not look forward to attending 2 of the 4 basic classes	49%
Afraid to ask questions in at least one class	36%
Do not feel that at least 2 out of 4 basic classes will be useful	29%
Bored in school most of the time	22%
Behavior	
Seldom talked to counselor (no more than 2 of 8 topics)	51%
Late for school 3 or more days over past 4 weeks	36%
Sent to office because of behavior	32%
Seldom talked to teachers (no more than 2 of 8 topics)	26%
Often or usually come to class without homework done	22%
Missed more than 3 days of school in past 4 weeks	21%
No reading on own	21%
Fewer than 2 hours of homework per week	10%
Sent to office because of problems with school work	10%
Grades below C	10%
No participation in school extracurricular activities	12%

The Count is Tentative! This is a tentative, arbitrary selection of factors which might indicate that an eighth grader would be likely to have some difficulty with his or her school performance. The selection of factors is based upon a thoughtful analysis rather than a statistical analysis. We have not tested this grouping either for its inclusiveness or exclusiveness (some items perhaps shouldn't be included and we may have missed some items). Factor analysis showed that the four attitude items held together as a factor. The first two items in the connectedness group (see below) held together as a factor, but participation in school activities showed only a low relationship to the other two. Being late and being absent held together as a factor, but going to the office showed only a low relationship to them. Non-participation and being sent to the office showed a moderate relationship to the items in the self-investment category.

Here are our assumptions for including the various items.

Connectedness. We assume that early teens need to feel connected with the school and teachers and other people in the school. Our cluster includes these three items.

Seldom talked to counselor (no more than 2 of 8 topics)
Seldom talked to teachers (no more than 2 of 8 topics)
No participation in school extracurricular activities

Voluntarily talking to teachers and counselors about topics beyond those where they are required to talk may indicate more connection with the adults in the school system. Other research has indicated that taking part in extracurricular activities helps youngsters feel more committed to school.

Attitude. How the student handles school participation and his or her overall orientation toward going to school, and continuing to learn is influenced by feelings about school experiences. Four items deal with attitude. The first three can be interpreted as meaning the student lacks understanding and interest in the content of his or her school program. The fourth item is different in that it indicates there is something in the classroom or the individual's personality which makes it difficult for him or her to interact.

Do not look forward to attending 2 of the 4 basic classes
Do not feel that at least 2 out of 4 basic classes will be useful
Bored in school most of the time
Afraid to ask questions in at least one class

Self-investment. The energy/time expended affects the extent to which students succeed in school. Four factors were selected because they give an indication of lack of investment in learning. The fourth factor, low grades, is only partially appropriate in this category. For many students low grades are an indication of lack of investment. However, some students may not have the ability to earn grades of C or above regardless of how hard they work. Regardless of whether they fit in this particular category or not, low grades are accepted by the majority of adult society as a sign of failure and thus may increase the overall risk of the youngster and may contribute to a feeling of low self-esteem.

Often or usually come to class without homework done
Fewer than 2 hours of homework per week
No reading on own
Grades below C

Actual behavior. Four other items deal with actual behavior shown which suggests either a lack of respect for school or that the student is already in difficulty with the school system.

Late for school 3 or more days over past 4 weeks
Sent to office because of behavior
Missed more than 3 days of school in past 4 weeks
Sent to office because of problems with school work

In the Raising Responsible Teens satellite program (May 11, 1993), J. D. Hawkins said that early anti-social behavior at school, academic failure, and lack of committment to school are three of 16 factors related to risk.

Percent at Risk In School – There was not a majority of students free from risk and a minority seriously at risk.

Only 2% of all eighth graders showed none of the 15 factors. On the other hand, only 8% showed half or more of the indicators. The average student (median) showed between three and four of these risk factors.

Higher percentages of Asian, Black, and Hispanic eighth graders showed fewer school risk indicators than did White youngsters. School risk indicators decreased as SES quartile increased. However, almost a fourth of those in the lowest SES quartile showed few risk indicators and at least one in ten of those in the highest SES quartile showed seven or more school risk indicators. Within each ethnic group, the percentage of eighth graders showing seven or more of the school risk indicators decreased as socio-economic status increased. There were ethnic differences with SES controlled. **Lowest SES Quartile.** 0-2 Indicators: Whites, 19%, to Asians, 37%; 7 or More Indicators: Asian, 10%, to Native American, 29%; **Highest SES Quartile** 0-2 Indicators: Whites, 29%, to Blacks, 40%; 7 or More Indicators: Asian and Black, 8%, to Hispanic, 14%.

Youngsters living with both parents showed the lowest percentage of 7 or more indicators. However, within this group over one in ten showed 7 or more indicators of school risk. There was only a partial relationship between showing the NELS:88 family risk factors and our set of school success indicators.

There was not an exclusive relationship between school risk factors and socio-economic status, although there was a definite trend for the number of school risk factors present to decrease as socio-economic status increased. However, only 20% of those in the lowest socio-economic quartile showed seven or more risk factors as compared with 10% in the highest quartile. At the other extreme, although 30% of the highest quartile showed fewer than three of the school risk indicators, so did 24% of those in the lowest quartile.

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Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
0-2 School risk indicators: White, Native American, 24% to 36% Asian	12
7 or more school risk indicators: Asian, Black, 10% to 25% Native American	15
Socio-economic Status	
7 or more school risk indicators: lowest, 20% to 10% highest SES quartile	10
4-H	
0-2 school risk indicators: nevers, 23% to 33% stayers	10

Findings Related to Individual Indicators. Information about the individual indicators will be found in the appropriate sections. Two of the items in the connectedness cluster (Talk to teacher or counselor) were covered in the communication section. Participation will be discussed in the section on life skill development activities. The items dealing with attitude are in the next section and the items on behavior will be covered later in this section.

Implications

The findings about the pervasiveness of the school risk indicators may mean that the school risk count is a faulty grouping, or it may mean something else. For example, it may mean that there is a much more relaxed norm among early teenagers about what is acceptably bad school behavior. Things like absence, tardiness, being sent to the office, not looking forward to class, or seeing basic classes as valuable in the future may be viewed as appropriate behavior by a good many youngsters regardless of the grade they are getting, whether or not they are gifted, and the kind of homes from which they come. If this is the case, the fact that there appears to be relatively little difference in relation to urbanicity and region would indicate that television, popular music, and other pervasive cultural media have helped bring this view into general acceptance across the country.

ORIENTATION TO BASIC SUBJECTS

Overall, fewer than one in five comparisons, 16%, showed substantial differences related to orientation to school. However, 58% of the comparisons made related to ethnicity yielded the difference. In most instances eighth graders of Asian heritage showed the most positive school orientation. None of the comparisons made for family type, urbanicity and region showed substantial differences.

Usefulness – Many eighth graders failed to see how some of the basic courses would be useful to them in the future. They were most likely to view English and Math as useful and least likely to see the relevance of Social Studies.

Slightly less than one-half of eighth graders thought all four of the basic subjects would be useful in their future. However, all except 3% saw at least one of the basic courses as useful. Most eighth graders, over 85%, thought English and Math classes would be useful in the future while fewer thought Social Studies, 59%, and Science, 68%, would be useful to them.

Lack of terms of understanding usefulness of courses was dispersed throughout the variables looked at. The only one of the seven variables that showed substantial differences related to the variable was ethnicity. This showed a substantial difference in relation to believing all four classes would be useful, but did not show substantial differences in relation to individual courses. Black eighth graders were most likely and White eighth graders were least likely to think all four of the basic classes would be useful in their future.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
All four courses will be useful in the future: White, 44% to 58% Black	14

Implications

Those working with nonschool youth programs can help youngsters increase their understanding of the relevance of core courses. This can be accomplished by putting youngsters into experiences where they can use information from the basic areas, especially science and social studies. It may also help for the adult to refer to how he or she makes use of the subjects in adult life.

Although the differences were not substantial, there was a trend for some youth from the higher socio-economic level to be more critical of relevance of course material than other youth. Teachers and those working with nonschool programs may find more challenge to the relevancy of material from youngsters from professional families.

Like to Attend – Many youngsters said they did not usually look forward to going to their classes. Boys, White youth, and suburban youth were most likely to say they usually did not look forward to going to class.

About one-fourth of eighth graders looked forward to attending all four basic classes. About half looked forward to attending two or three of the four basic classes. One in ten did not look forward to attending any of the courses. Somewhat over half said they did not usually look forward to attending the individual classes: English, 44%; Math, 43%; Social Studies, 41%; Science, 39%.

White youngsters were most likely to say that they did not look forward to attending classes. Eighth graders in the lowest SES quartile were more likely to look forward to attending all four classes than were those in the highest SES quartile. Boys were much more likely to say they did not look forward to attending English and Social Studies classes than girls did.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Look forward to attending all four classes: White, 21% to 43% Black	22
Did not look forward to attending:	
English: Black and Native American, 27% to 48% White	21
Math: Asian and Black, 32% to 48% of White	16
Social Studies: Black, 32% to 44% of White	12
Science: Black, 31% to 42% White	11
Socio-economic Status	
Looked forward to attending:	
All four classes: lowest, 34% to 22% highest SES quartile	12
English: lowest, 37% to 47% highest SES quartile	10
Sex of Student	
Did not look forward to attending:	
English: girls, 10%; 38% boys	28
Social studies: girls, 7%; 45% boys	38
4-H	
Looked forward to attending all four classes: leavers, 20% to 32% joiners	12

Implications
It is impossible to tell from the study where the problem lies for students who do not look forward to attending class. It may be the curriculum or teacher conducting the class. It may be because the youngster has other interests or peers do not think it is cool to go to class. If adults sense this kind of attitude in their community, they may want to carefully monitor both the quality and relevance of teaching and peer attitudes.

The ethnic differences may indicate a greater cultural orientation toward school, or greater appreciation of the opportunity to go to class on the part of some youngsters. It is likely that those who do not usually like to go to class will not be attracted to explore nonschool programs which resemble school. This means that nonschool programs which include education as a goal may have to provide such activities in ways that do not resemble school instruction. This may be especially true when working with White suburban teens. On the other hand, the fact that there is a percentage who usually do like school may explain why a small minority of youngsters continue in Scouts and 4-H through the eighth grade. It also means that some youngsters from all ethnic heritages may appreciate class-like activities in nonschool programs.

Asking Questions – **Most eighth graders were not afraid to ask questions in class. However, there was a fairly sizeable portion who were afraid to ask questions in at least one class.**

Over one-third of eighth graders were afraid to ask questions in at least one of their classes. Only a few, 3%, were afraid to ask questions in all their classes. The percentages indicating that they were often afraid to ask questions were as follows: Social Studies and Science classes, 15%; English, 16%; and Math, 21%. Although these percentages look low, stated in other terms on the average across the country, more than one of every five students in Math class was hesitant to ask questions. The number was one in 10 students in other classes. About one-third of the White, Black, and Asian eighth graders said they were afraid to ask questions in at least one class as compared with Native Americans, 48%, and Hispanics, 43%.

In each subject area the percentage afraid to ask questions in class decreased as SES increased. However, the differences were not substantial. The range from lowest SES quartile to highest SES quartile were as follows: Math, 25% to 18%; English, 19% to 12%; Social Studies, 20% to 11%; Science, 19% to 11%.

Boys and girls were about equally likely to be afraid to ask questions in class with the exception of Math class where girls were somewhat more likely to be afraid to ask questions. There was very little difference in the percent afraid to ask questions when urban, rural, and suburban eighth graders were compared.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Not afraid to ask questions in the four classes:	
Native American, 52% to 65% Black and White	13
Afraid to ask questions in:	
Math: White, 19% to 36% Native American	17
Science: White, 14% to 28% Native American	14
Social Studies: White, 13% to 23% Native American	10
4-H	
Afraid to ask questions in:	
None of the four classes: joiners, 52% to 64% nevers	12
Math: nevers and stayers, 20% to 32% joiners	12
Social Studies: three groups, 14% to 26% joiners	12
English: nevers and leavers, 15% to 25% joiners	10
Science: leavers, 13% to 23% joiners	10

Implications It is important that those working with nonschool youth groups be alert to the extent to which

each participant is comfortable in asking questions. Help should be provided for those who are least confident and/or have trouble clarifying assignments and identifying what they need to know in order to keep up with others. Care needs to be given that each individual has the opportunity to ask questions either in front of the entire group or on a one-to-one basis. Adults needs to be aware of how they react to questions and if they are sending negative signals that may prevent participants from asking questions. Do they put youth down for "stupid" questions? Are they impatient when re-explaining something already covered?

Boredom – It appeared that most eighth graders feel bored at least occasionally at school. Many said they were bored half or more of the time they were in school.

Only 4% of the eighth graders indicated that they were never bored, 49% said once in a while, 25% indicated about half the time, and 22% indicated they were bored most of the time. The percent indicating feeling bored in school seemed to be similar regardless of the variables examined. The greatest difference found among the characteristics examined was that White youngsters were more likely to admit to being bored at least half the time than were eighth graders of Hispanic, Black, or Asian heritage. Overall differences related to socio-economic status were slight.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Bored at least half of the time:	
Hispanic, Black, and Asian, 39% to 50% White, Native American	11
4-H	
Bored at least half of the time: stayers, 40% to 50% leavers	10

There was a marked relationship between the student's perception of being bored and the student's feeling that teachers did not praise his or her efforts or listen to what the student had to say. The range in percentage feeling that 'teachers did not praise efforts' was from 21% of those who said they were 'never bored' to 52% of those who said they were 'bored most of the time.' The range in those feeling that 'teachers did not listen to them' was 21% of those who were 'never bored' to 52% of those who said they were 'bored most of the time' they were in school. A similar range in terms of feeling that 'teachers put the student down' was from 22% of those who were 'never bored' to 36% of those who said they were 'bored most of the time.' The similarity in the percents for the three questions may indicate a general negative attitude tapped by the questions rather than an answer to the specific question. In other words, a youngster turned off on school may simply have checked the most negative response.

There may be a relationship between grades and boredom in that those who received low grades were more likely to indicate that they were frequently bored in school. The range in the percent saying that they were bored in school most of the time was from 11% of the A students to 39% of those averaging grades of less than C. When the percent saying half or more and the percent saying most of the time were added together, there was a 23 percentage point difference between the A students and the below C students in terms of feeling bored in school (A students, 40%; below C students 63%). Although there appeared to be an association, only part of the eighth graders reacted in this way. Regardless of grade received some youngsters were quite bored. On the other hand, some who said they were bored earned high grades.

Implications

A feeling of disengagement and disinterest is a characteristic of many in this age group. If this is a true indication, school is not challenging enough or teachers are not respecting how they see youngsters growing in maturity. Then considerably more thought must be given to the right strategy adults should use in conducting programs. If on the other hand, this is a social ploy in which younger teens feel that they are showing maturity by deliberately disengaging, the challenge in developing programs is even greater. Adults then need a different strategy to break through and reach the youngsters. Adults working with youths of this age need to beware that they can become bored easily. A variety of strategies need to be developed for each individual program to help eliminate this potential problem.

However, something more may be occurring here than just a reaction to school. We may be dealing with values and attitudes instilled at home, through the media, and by the community and society about such things as the need to be entertained, about the need of less schooling, and about the importance of grades.

SCHOOL BEHAVIOR

Over a third, 38%, of the comparisons made on school behavior items yielded substantial differences. The range across variables was from 6% found for urbanicity and for region to 71% appearing related to ethnicity.

Problems – Behaving in school was a problem for some youngsters of this age but not for others.

Fewer than 10% of the eighth graders seemed to have chronic behavior problems as defined by being in trouble three or more times during the semester. One in ten had been sent to the office because of problems with their school work. Almost a third of the eighth graders said they had been sent to the office for misbehaving. However, only about one in ten was sent three or more times. Almost a fourth of the eighth graders said they had gotten into at least one physical fight during the semester. However, less than 10% said they had gotten into three or more fights.

There were marked differences in responses according to ethnic groups. In most instances, eighth graders of Asian heritage were the least likely to indicate school behavior problems. In most instances Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans showed higher percentages of behavior problems than did Whites. Risky school behavior decreased as socio-economic quartile increased. However, well over half of the youth in the lower two SES quartiles did not report risky behavior and some youth in the upper quartiles did show risky behavior.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Sent to office for misbehaving: Native American and Black, 44% to 22% Asian	22
Was in a physical fight: Native American, 37% to 18% of Asian	19
Socio-economic Status	
Was in a physical fight: lowest, 31% to 16% highest SES quartile	15
Family Type	
Sent to office for misbehaving: both parents, 28% to 44% neither parent	16
Sex of Student	
Sent to office for misbehaving: girls, 20%; 44% boys	24
Was in a physical fight: girls, 11%; 34% boys	23
4-H	
Sent to office for misbehaving: leavers, 26% to 46% joiners	20
Was in a physical fight: nevers, 21% to 36% joiners	15

Parents were most likely to receive warnings about grades, 37%, and least likely to receive warnings about attendance, 12%. Although a fairly substantial percentage of girls showed risky school behavior, boys showed larger of percentages of being in trouble in school. The greatest differences came in terms of being sent to the office for misbehaving at least once during the semester, and being in a physical fight. The least difference appeared in terms of parents being warned about attendance, 13%, boys and 11% girls. Boys, 14%, were more likely to be sent to the office because of problems with school work than were girls, 7%. The parents of boys were more likely to receive warnings about grades and about behavior than were the parents of girls.

In all instances, eighth graders living with both natural parents showed the least percentage of poor school behavior and those living with someone else showed the highest percentage. However, some youth living with both natural parents were in trouble frequently, and over half of the youth living with someone other than their natural parents showed no indications of school behavior problems. There was no evidence that youth living in single-parent families were more likely to show behavior problems than those living with one natural parent and a stepparent.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Parents warned about student's:	
Grades: Native American, 45% to 27% of Asian	18
Behavior: Black, 32% to 17% Asian	15
Socio-economic Status	
Parents warned about student's:	
Grades: lowest, 42% to 21% highest SES quartile	21
Behavior: lowest, 27% to 17% highest SES quartile	10
Attendance: lowest, 19% to 7% highest SES quartile	12
Family Type	
Parents warned about student's:	
Fighting: both parents, 20% to 35% neither parent	15
Grades: both parents, 33% to 48% neither parent	15
Attendance: both parents, 9% to 22% neither parent	13
Behavior: both parents, 19% to 31% neither parent	12
Sex of Student	
Parents warned about student's:	
Behavior: girls 14%; 30% boys	16
Grades: girls 31%; 42% boys	11
4-H	
Parents warned about student's behavior: stayers, 16% to 32% joiners	16

Implications Adults working with youth of this age must be sensitive to how youngsters react when they do not feel comfortable in the culture that prevails. Adults need to be aware, try to prevent and react appropriately to behavioral and attendance problems that may spill over into their program from the school and family.

Investing self – A sizeable percentage of eighth graders appeared unwilling or unable to invest much of themselves in their school work through homework, outside reading, or working to earn good grades.

At least one eighth grader in five, 22%, said they frequently (usually or often) came to class without their homework completed. Only a fourth said they never came to class without their homework done. Over half said they spent less than an hour a week on each of their subjects. The range in percent indicating spending none or less than one hour on homework was from math, 51% to 63% science. Most, 70%, said that in total they spent less than five and a half hours per week on homework. A few said they did not spend any time on homework. Only 13% said they spent as much as ten hours a week on homework (Two hours per day would be 14 hours).

There was considerable difference related to ethnicity in the extent to which eighth graders came to class without their homework done. Asian youth were most likely to have done their homework. The percent coming to class frequently without completed homework decreased as SES increased. However, some in each SES quartile frequently were without their homework and others never came to class without homework completed.

Within all ethnic groups except Native Americans the percent who frequently came to class without homework completed decreased as SES quartile increased. Although the highest percent saying they never came to class without completed school work appeared in the highest SES quartile, there was a consistent trend of increasing with SES only in the cases of Blacks and Whites.

There were differences related to family composition.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Never come to class without homework: Native American, 25% to 37% Asian	12
Frequently come to class without homework: Asian and White, 21% to 38% Native American	17
Socio-economic Status	
Frequently come to class without homework: lowest, 28% to 16% highest SES quartile	12
Family Type	
Frequently come to class without homework: both parents, 19% to 30% neither parent	11
Never come to class without homework: father/stepmother, 20% to 30% both parents	10
4-H	
Frequently come to class without homework: leavers and stayers, 18% to 28% joiners	10

Implications

There is some question about whether homework means schoolwork done at home or school work done in homeroom or other times at school. However, the fact remains that a good many eighth graders are not doing much homework. This finding raises questions about why this is so and whether or not youth are learning responsibility. The message for those working with nonschool educational programs is that some youth may not be accustomed to working at home.

Absent or Tardy – Many eighth graders tended to miss school or be tardy.

The eighth graders in the NELS:88 survey were asked, "How many days of school did you miss over the past four weeks?" Fewer than half had perfect attendance for the month. Almost one in ten, 7%, had missed more than an average of one day a week.

Over a third of the eighth graders had been late at least once in the one month's time. Over one in ten had been late at least three days. A few, 2%, had been late more than ten days out of four weeks.

There were substantial differences related to ethnicity. However, some in each ethnic group had perfect attendance and some had several absences. Even though Whites and Asians were less likely to be late for school than others, still over a third of these groups had been late at least once in four weeks. On the other hand, even though those of other heritages had higher percentages indicating they had been late for school, over half of those of Native American, Hispanic or Black heritage had not been late at all during the month period.

Eighth graders from the lowest SES quartile were least likely to have perfect attendance for the four weeks and most likely to have been absent more than five days. However, over a third of these youngsters did have perfect attendance.

In both the lowest and highest SES quartile all ethnic groups except Native Americans had higher percentages of eighth graders with perfect attendance than did Whites. It is also to be noted that there was a small percent of eighth graders in each socio-economic and ethnic group who were absent five or more times in four weeks.

There were moderate differences in terms of being late for school when region was examined. There were some differences in school attendance in relation to family composition.

There were marked differences related to urbanicity with urban youngsters more likely to be late than rural youngsters. Although there were differences related to family composition, even about a third of the youngsters who lived with both natural or adoptive parents had been late for school at least once during the previous four weeks. There were also marked differences among regions.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
No absences: Native American, 31% to 58% Asian	27
No late days: Native American, 51% to 66% White and Asian	15
Socio-economic Status	
Frequently absent: lowest, 19% to 6% highest SES quartile	13
No absences: lowest, 39% to 49% highest SES quartile	10
Family Type	
No absences: mother only, 37% to 54% father/stepmother	17
No late days: father only, 57% to 67% both parents	10
Urbanicity	
No late days: urban, 56% to 69% rural	13
Region	
No late days: Western, 54%, to 70% North Central	16
4-H	
No late days: joiners, 56% to 73% stayers	17

Implications

We do not know from the study whether the high percent of students being late or tardy is caused by factors outside of the student and family's control. However, if they are caused by carelessness, the families, schools, and the community should develop a pervasive attitude about the importance of being on time and attending each day. Permissiveness about school attendance sets poor standards for students when they go to work. In addition, being permitted to reduce the productivity of a class by such behavior, carries over to reducing productivity in the work force.

It may be important for youth and parenting programs to emphasize that being on time, attending class regularly and having work completed indicates respect for themselves and others. It is a reflection of who they are.

LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

Early teens are perfecting skills and developing knowledge, attitudes, and values that they will use throughout their life. These skills can be learned in group settings at school or in community groups, and they can be learned independently through employment, reading, and watching television. Exploring what youth take part in provides information about (1) what interests early teens, (2) what is and is not available to them, and (3) what may compete for the eighth graders' time and attention. This section includes information on supplementary school classes, nonschool classes, extracurricular activities, nonschool youth programs, use of community resources, employment, and amount of reading and viewing of television.

Overall the many activities grouped as life skill development showed relatively few differences in relation to the seven student variables examined in this study. Only 22% yielded differences of 10 or more percentage points. General participation, working for pay, and taking extra courses in school showed the fewest differences in relation to the variables examined. 4-H participation showed the most differences related to

participation. Socio-economic status showed several differences related to nonschool classes and ethnicity showed differences related to nonschool activity. It is to be noted that family type did not seem to make many differences in relation to taking part in life skill-building activities.

SCHOOL COURSES

Elective courses offered by the school system often focus on areas which help develop skills needed in home, work, leisure, or community.

Supplemental courses -- Few students took many enrichment courses as part of their eighth grade school program.

Most eighth graders, 80%, took Physical Education classes. Very few were taking Consumer Education, 6%, or Vocational Agriculture classes, 4%. Usually a third or fewer took part in other classes with the exception of Music, 45% and Art, 42%. The percentages saying they took part in other classes at least once a week were Computer, 33%; Foreign Language, 28%; Shop, 27%; Home Economics, 25%; Religious Education, 19% (11% of the schools attended were parochial schools); Sex Education, 17%; Typing, 13%; and Drama and Speech, 11%.

Information was not available as to how many schools offered these courses to eighth graders. However, the school questionnaire did provide information on the percent of schools requiring eighth graders to take the following courses: Physical Education, 94%; Art, 69%; Music, 57%; Computer Education, 51%; Family Life/Sex Education, 47%.

Music and religion showed the greatest number of substantial differences. When variables were examined, substantial differences appeared in relation to ethnicity, socio-economic status, and family type.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Music: Hispanic, 33% to 51% White	18
Religion: Black, 35% to 48% White	13
Art: Hispanic, 37% to 47% White	10
Socio-economic Status	
Religion: lowest, 29% to 59% highest SES quartile	30
Music: lowest, 41% to 51% highest SES quartile	10
Family Type	
Religion: neither parent, 32% to 49% both parents	17
Music: father and stepmother, 39% to 51% both parents	12
Sex of Student	
Shop: girls 23%; 40% boys	17
4-H	
Religion: joiners, 34% to 54% stayers	20
Computer: leavers, 29% to 42% joiners	13
Music: joiners, 46% to 58% stayers	12

Implications

Adults working with this age group need to know what type of school and community classes are offered to youth. Adults can reinforce the positive benefit of elective classes which help to develop the "whole" person. In some instances, providing learning opportunities not offered by the formal school system may provide an opportunity for an outside of school organization to attract interested youth to its program. In other instances, the sponsors may consider integrating their program with those of the school or other organizations to provide for more complete learning and conserve scarce resources. Parents and community leaders may also want to serve as advocates for the school continuing to offer various enriching courses, or in communities where that is not possible, organize inexpensive lessons/classes offered through other community organizations or institutions.

NONSCHOOL CLASSES

Socio-economic status showed the most differences of 10 percentage points or more, 67%, and urbanicity and region both showed no substantial differences in relation to classes or lessons taken from a source other than school.

Lessons and Classes – Many eighth graders took religious classes outside of school. Fewer took other lessons and classes. Many teens may not be able to afford lessons which would further their talents and interests.

Although almost two-thirds of eighth graders took part in one or more nonschool classes, only about a fourth were taking classes or lessons other than religious classes. Fewer than one-fifth took part in more than two classes or lessons. Religious lessons, which usually have no enrollment fee, were the most frequent nonschool class indicated, 41%. Few eighth graders were taking lessons which frequently have a cost. The highest percent, 25%, were taking some form of music lessons. The percentage taking other kinds of lessons were as follows: dance, 16%; computer, 11%; art, 8%; language, 4%; history of own culture, 4%; other skills such as gymnastics, sports, swimming, horseback riding, 20%.

There was a clear trend for the percentage of eighth graders taking nonschool lessons or classes to increase as socio-economic status increased. The range in percent taking at least one kind of class/lesson from a source other than school was from 41% percent of those in the lowest SES quartile to 83% of those in the highest quartile. Substantial differences also appeared among ethnic groups in regard to four of the classes; family type in three classes; and sex of student in two classes. The substantial differences were most likely to appear related to taking music or religion courses.

Family type also showed substantial differences in relation to music and religion. However, even in the highest SES quartile less than half were taking music lessons. Those from families in the highest SES quartile and those living with both parents were most likely to take at least one nonschool class.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Music: Hispanic, 13% to 33% Asian	20
Religion: Black and Native American, 35% to 48% White	13
Language: 2% or 3% of each of other groups to 15% Asian	12
History of their culture: Hispanic, 2% to 13% Native American	11
Socio-economic Status	
At least one nonschool class: lowest, 41% to 83% highest SES quartile	42
Music: lowest, 9% to 45% highest SES quartile	36
Religion: lowest, 29% to 59% highest SES quartile	30
Dance: lowest, 6% to 27% highest SES quartile	21
Computer: lowest, 5% to 18% highest SES quartile	13
Art: lowest, 3% to 15% highest SES quartile	12
Family Type	
At least one nonschool classes: neither parent, 46% to 67% both parents	21
Music: father/stepmother and neither parent, 15% to 29% both parents	14
Religion: single father, 23% to 37% both parents	14
Sex of Student	
Dance: boys 3%; 29% girls	26
Music: boys 20%; 30% girls	10
4-H	
Religion: joiners, 34% to 54% stayers	20
Music: joiners, 15% to 33% stayers	18
Other nonschool classes: joiners, 16% to 29% stayers	13

Implications

Some nonschool youth organizations may want to give more attention to providing group instruction which helps youngsters develop special talents and interests. This is especially true for those serving youth from lower socio-economic status families. Music, dance, and lessons which develop proficiency in various individual sports appear to have the most appeal. However, areas like language and history of specific cultures may show a low percentage because few communities offer them and teens are less aware of such courses. The image of youngsters being too busy with nonschool lessons to take part in youth programs may be reality for some youngsters in upper socio-economic families, but is clearly a myth for most younger teens.

SCHOOL EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMS

The only variable which showed many differences for youth taking part in school extracurricular activities was that of 4-H participation, where 86% of the comparisons were of 10 percentage points or more. The other percentages ranged from 0% for urbanicity to 18% of the comparisons made of ethnicity and socio-economic status.

Availability – Schools varied in the kinds of opportunities open to eighth graders.

Although many schools offer a variety of extracurricular activities to eighth graders, some offer more choices than do others. Almost all schools (92%) offered athletic activities. Most schools, 83%, offer one or more musical activities. Many schools offered one or more communication type activities. Over half, 55%, had an eighth grade yearbook and in almost half of the schools eighth graders could work on a school newspaper. However, only about a fourth of the eighth grades had a speech or debate team and only one in five had a drama club. The percent of schools offering various clubs to eighth graders ranged from 8% with history clubs to 34% with computer clubs. About two-thirds had science fairs open to eighth graders. About two-thirds of the schools have a student council and slightly more than two-fifths have an eighth grade academic honor society.

Number – Most eighth graders participated in at least one extracurricular activity at school.

About 88% of eighth graders participated in one or more school extracurricular activities. Thirty-five percent participated in four or more.

Substantial differences in the percent taking part in four or more extracurricular activities appeared related to both ethnicity and socio-economic status. Hispanic youngsters were less likely to be active in school extracurricular activities. However, almost a third of the eighth graders of Hispanic heritage were taking part in four or more activities. Black eighth graders and those in the highest socio-economic status quartile showed the highest percentage taking part in four or more extracurricular activities. None of the differences related to not taking part in extracurricular activities were considered substantial.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
4 or more school extracurricular activities: Hispanic, 30% to 40% Black	10
Socio-economic Status	
4 or more school extracurricular activities: lowest, 29% to 42% highest SES quartile	13
4-H	
4 or more school extracurricular activities: nevers, 34% to 57% joiners	23

Specific Activities -- However, other than athletics and music, relatively few eighth graders were taking part in other specific activities.

Athletic Activities. Three-fifths of eighth graders participated in one or more athletic activities. Nearly one-half participated in varsity sports and 43% participated in intramural sports. Cheerleading involved about one in ten eighth graders. Participation in varsity and intramural sports increased as SES increased. Boys were somewhat more likely to participate in varsity and intramural sports and girls more likely to be in cheerleading. Differences related to ethnicity were considered substantial. However, participation in varsity sports increased as socio-economic status increased.

Music Activities. About half of the eighth graders were involved in one or more musical activities. Whites were somewhat more likely to participate in musical activities and participation increased as SES increased. Girls were more likely to participate than were boys.

Communication Activities. Only about one-fourth of eighth grade students were involved in one or more of communication activities: speech, debate, drama, newspaper, and yearbook. Differences related to variable were not substantial.

Clubs. About a third of the eighth graders, 39%, participated in one or more subject-matter clubs. Slightly more than one-fourth took part in a science fair while fewer than 10% participated in other subject-matter clubs. Black eighth graders were most likely and Hispanic eighth graders were least likely to participate in subject-matter clubs. Participation in clubs increased as socio-economic quartile increased. Youngsters who took part in Scouts or 4-H were more likely to take part in subject matter clubs than were those who did not take part in such programs.

Leadership Activities. About 13% of eighth graders were involved in student council or honor societies. 4-H was the only variable that showed a substantial difference.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
One or more musical activity: Hispanic, 40% to 51% White	11
Chorus/choir: Hispanic, 18% to 28% Black	10
Science fairs: Hispanic, 23% to 34% Black	11
Computer club: White, 4% to 14% Black	10
Socio-economic Status	
One or more musical activity: lowest, 41% to 54% highest SES quartile	13
Band/orchestra: lowest, 17% to 27% highest SES quartile	10
Varsity sports: lowest, 42% to 53% highest SES quartile	11
Religious organizations: lowest, 10% to 20% highest SES quartile	10
Family Type	
One or more musical activity: single father, 41% to 51% both parents	10
Sex of Student	
Cheerleading: boys 4%; 18% girls	14
Varsity sports: girls 42%; 54% boys	10
One or more musical activity: boys 40%; 58% girls	18
Region	
Varsity sports: South, 43% to 56% North Central	13
4-H	
One or more school clubs: nevers, 43% to 65% joiners	22
Vocational Education clubs: nevers, 3% to 23% joiners	20
History clubs: nevers and leavers, 2% to 20% joiners	18
Science clubs: nevers and leavers, 4% to 22% joiners	18
Science fairs: nevers 27% to 42% joiners	15
Math clubs: leavers, 5% to 20% joiners	15
Other clubs: leavers, 5% to 28% joiners	23

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More (continued)

One or more communication activity: leavers, 24% to 46% joiners	22
Yearbook: leavers, 12% to 33% joiners	21
Drama Club: leavers, 6% to 27% joiners	21
Newspaper: nevers and leavers, 11% to 27% joiners	16
Debate and speech: leavers, 3% to 19% joiners	16
One or more musical activity: nevers, 52% to 64% stayers	12
Dance: leavers, 25% to 41% joiners	16
Band/orchestra: nevers, 22% to 34% stayers	12
Chorus/choir: nevers, 23% to 34% joiners	11
One or more athletic activity: stayers and leavers, 63% to 76% joiners	13
Varsity sports: nevers, 47% to 61% joiners	14
Intramural sports: leavers, 39% to 54% joiners	15
Cheerleading: nevers, 10% to 25% joiners	15
Academic honor society: nevers, 13% to 31% joiners	18
Student council: nevers, 12% to 26% joiners	14
Religious group: nevers, 14% to 25% joiners	11

Religion. Slightly more than half of eighth graders were involved in one or more school or nonschool religious activities. (11% of schools in the sample were parochial schools). There were no substantial differences.

Implications

This survey was conducted in 1988 just as more girls were becoming involved in sports activities. Adults working with informal youth groups should consider this change when trying to involve girls in their programs. School sports activities are important to many eighth graders. Incorporating some type of athletic activities as part of an educational program many attract youth interested in such activities.

Adults working with informal youth groups should consider providing an opportunity for youth to participate in nonthreatening musical activities. This would be particularly important for boys and in locations where musical opportunities are limited.

Participation in communication activities is important to the development of life skills in writing and speaking. Informal youth groups need to continue offering and expanding opportunities which help younger teens build and test communications skills. This may require developing creative programs which are attractive to eighth graders.

There were very few eighth graders participating in subject-matter clubs. There appears to be an opportunity for adults working with informal youth groups to provide educational programs which may attract eighth graders. In addition, there may be an opportunity for cooperation and collaboration with schools and teachers to develop joint programming where both would benefit. On the other hand, low participation may be indicative of the fact that many of this age group do not want the regimentation which may be involved when a club structure is emphasized.

The small percentage serving as an officer in a school extracurricular activity may indicate that there is an opportunity for informal youth groups to provide leadership activities to a larger number of youth.

While nearly all parents indicated a religious preference, only about half of their eighth graders participated in a school or nonschool religious activity. However, some religions may not have specific activities for youth.

NONSCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Ninety-one percent of the 4-H and 73% of the ethnicity comparisons showed differences of 10 or more percentage points.

Total Number – One in five eighth graders did not take part in any community-based activity.

Overall, one-fifth of the eighth graders reported not participating in any of the ten nonschool activities included in the survey. Scouts, 4-H, and Boys and Girls Clubs were included in this total. The majority, 60%, reported participating in one or two activities, and 20% said they participated in four or more community programs.

There were differences in the number of activities when ethnicity and socio-economic status were examined. Hispanic eighth graders were least likely to be taking part in nonschool programs. However, more than one in ten youngsters of Hispanic heritage took part in four or more such programs. Black youngsters were most likely to be taking part, but one in five Black and one in five White eighth graders did not take part in any of the programs. Almost a third of the eighth graders from the lowest socio-economic quartile were not taking part in any nonschool programs, and only 3% were taking part in four or more.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
4 or more nonschool activities: Hispanic, 16% to 29% of Black	13
No nonschool activities: White and Black, 21% to 32% Hispanic	11
Socio-economic Status	
4 or more nonschool activities: highest, 3% to 18% other three SES quartiles	15
No nonschool activities: lowest, 31% to 13% highest SES quartile	18
4-H	
4 or more nonschool activities: leavers, 15% to 62% joiners	47

National Programs – Low percentages of eighth graders took part in three national programs which combine learning and social activities, Scouts, Boys or Girls Clubs, and 4-H. Substantially more had taken part in Scouts and 4-H before they entered the eighth grade.

Relatively few eighth graders took part in any of the three programs. The largest enrollment was found in Scouts, 14%. Lower enrollments were found for Boys and Girls Clubs, 11%, and 4-H, 9%. Considerably more of the respondents had taken part in Scouts, 38%, and 4-H, 14%, before the eighth grade than had continued into the eighth grade. On the other hand, fewer, 9%, had taken part in Boys and Girls Clubs before the eighth grade.

Although participation in these three national youth programs was low among eighth graders, the programs continued to hold or attract some participants from all ethnic and socio-economic groups. There appeared to be an overlap of membership among the three programs with youth belonging to both 4-H and Scouts or to some other combination of the three. Many of those who stayed in 4-H till the eighth grade or joined as new members in the eighth grade were also participating in other nonschool programs and in school extracurricular activities. There was a marked similarity in the findings for the three programs.

Black youth were more likely to belong to each of these three programs than were White youth. The percent of eighth graders participating in 4-H and Boys or Girls Clubs decreased as socio-economic status quartile increased. Although there was a difference in participation in 4-H and Boys or Girls Clubs related to rural or urban area, members in both organizations came from all three urbanicity groups.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Boys or Girls Clubs: White, 8% to 24% Black	16
4-H: Hispanic, 7% to 20% Black	13
Urbanicity	
Boys or Girls Clubs: suburban, 9% to 19% urban youth	10
4-H: urban, 5% to 15% suburban youth	10
Region	
4-H: Northeast, 16% to 34% South	18
4-H	
Boys or Girls Clubs: leavers, 5% to 41% joiners	36
Scouts: leavers, 9% to 33% joiners	24

Few younger teens used one of the three national programs as a replacement for other activities. Most of those taking part in one of the three youth groups also took part in other community youth activities such as sports and religious groups. Most 4-H members, 87%, took part in at least one of the other eight nonschool programs included in the NELS:88 survey. Over half took part in a total of four or more programs, at least three in addition to 4-H. Only 13% checked 4-H as the only program to which they belonged. The pattern was very similar for Scouts. Nine percent indicated they belonged only to Scouts. The pattern for Boys or Girls Clubs was similar to 4-H and Scouts, but involved even more activity. Only 6% of the eighth graders said they belonged only to Boys or Girls Clubs. Over two-thirds of the Boys or Girls Clubs participants said they took part in a total of at least four programs. More took part in more school extracurricular activities than did those who were not members of one of the national programs.

Implications

Although some teens are attracted to the kinds of programs offered by Scouts, 4-H, and Boys or Girls Clubs, many are not. In some cases the programs are too similar to those offered for children and have not been adapted sufficiently to capture the interest and changing cultural expectations of teens. Considerable ingenuity is required by community leaders and leaders within national youth organizations to find the kind of learning activities which appeal to younger teens.

Other Programs – Fewer than half took part in any one specific nonschool program offered in their communities.

The most popular nonschool programs were sports teams, 37%, and religious groups, 34%. A few more eighth graders took part in summer programs, 19%, hobby clubs, 16%, YMCA/YWCA, 15%, and neighborhood groups, 13%, than took part in Scouts, 4-H, or Boys or Girls Clubs. Black eighth graders were slightly more likely to participate and Whites least likely to participate in these programs. Participation increased as SES increased.

Nonschool sport teams showed very small differences when examined by ethnicity, but a marked increase in participation as SES increased. Boys were more likely to participate in nonschool team sports than were girls. White eighth graders were somewhat more likely to participate in religious groups than were other ethnic groups. Here, too, participation increased as SES increased.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Summer programs: White, 17% to 30% Black	13
Neighborhood groups: White, 11% to 23% Black	12
Religious groups: Hispanic, 25%, to 37% White	12
Y programs: Asian, 13% to 23% Black	10
Socio-economic Status	
Religious groups: lowest, 22% to 46% highest SES quartile	24
Team sports: lowest, 30% to 45% highest SES quartile	15

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More (continued)

Family Type	
Team sports: neither parent, 29% to 40% both parents	11
Sex of Student	
Team sports: girls 30%; 45% boys	15
4-H	
Y program: leavers, 12% to 48% joiners	36
Hobby groups: leavers, 12% to 43% joiners	31
Neighborhood groups: leavers, 9% to 40% joiners	31
Summer programs: leavers, 16% to 42% joiners	26
Team sports: leavers, 32% to 52% joiners	20
Other nonschool programs: nevers and leavers, 43% to 59% joiners	16
Religious groups: nevers, 32% to 48% stayers	16

Implications

Adults working with nonschool programs need to examine how their group compares in diversity of membership to this national sample of eighth graders. It is clear from this study that eighth graders of all ethnic groups, socio-economic classes, and family types do participate in nonschool programs. The argument about certain groups not wanting to participate does not appear to hold up under careful examination. Attempts need to be made to attract and engage underserved groups.

Since sports appear to play an important part in the lives of many eighth graders, strategies including activities which improve sports ability might attract some eighth graders. Less than half of younger teens took part in religious groups. Furthermore, that the percentage was even lower in the lower socio-economic quartile. These facts raise a question about the need for other community groups which help youth develop such things as stewardship, personal values, and character development that often are emphasized in religious programs.

GENERAL PARTICIPATION

Only participating in 4-H, 67%, showed a difference related to general participation (total number of school and nonschool activities or serving as an officer). None of the other variables showed a difference of 10 or more percentage points. Differences related to athletics have been included earlier in the count on comparisons. However, because information appears in two places and athletics are so popular with this age group, additional emphasis is given in this section.

Office – Only 10% held an office in a nonschool group. Slightly more, 14%, were serving as an officer or team leader in extracurricular activities.

The range was from 1% serving as an officer in Boys and Girls clubs and other community groups to 3% serving as an officer of a religious group or team sport. Youngsters appeared to have equal opportunities to serve as an officer regardless of ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds. Serving as an officer only showed a substantial differences when examined in relation to 4-H participation.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

4-H	PPD
Holding an office in nonschool activities: leavers, 10% to 43% joiners	33
Holding an office at school: leavers, 13% to 30% joiners	17

Implications

While some eighth graders participated as an officer in a nonschool activities, there appears to be a need for more opportunities for those working with nonschool groups to enhance and expand leadership development opportunities.

Athletics – **Of all of the various content areas, athletic activity appeared to be especially appealing to this age group.**

Findings in the section on school enrichment courses, lessons outside of school, nonschool activities, and school extracurricular activities all show that a high percentage of younger teens were taking part in sports and athletic programs. Sports and athletic activities seem to be about as popular with girls as with boys.

Implications

The finding of most concern is that the participation rate increased as socio-economic quartile increased. This raises a question as to whether some of team sports activities cost more money than some families can afford, or whether there is more family pressure from those in families of higher socio-economic status for their children to take part in sports.

Sports and athletic activities, when well-conducted, help youth with several developmental activities including coordination, quick mental processing, cooperation, sportsmanship, and maintaining physical and mental well-being. It is important for the adults who oversee such sports and activities to help youngsters learn from the participation as well as to enjoy the physical and social activity involved. Nonschool programs should be alert to who is not having adequate opportunities to take part and excel in sports activities offered by other sources and should consider whether additional athletic programs are needed.

Total Participation – **Slightly over one eighth grader in 20 was not taking part in any youth activity either at school or in the community.**

About 12% of the eighth graders were not participating in any of the 21 school extracurricular activities listed; about 20% were not taking part in any of the nonschool programs. Some participated in one and some in another. When further analysis was done, it was found that only 6% of the eighth graders were not taking part in any organized youth activity.

Differences among variables other than 4-H did not reach 10 percentage points. For example, the range in no participation among those of differing ethnic heritages was from 4% of Asians to 12% of Native Americans. The difference in terms of socio-economic status was from lowest SES quartile, 11%, to the highest SES quartile, 2%. There was a small percentage of nonparticipants in all categories when ethnicity and socio-economic status were examined together. Blacks showed the least variation while SES and Native Americans showed the most. Among White eighth graders the range across SES groups was from 12% of those in the lowest to 2% of those in the highest quartile not participating in any organized youth activity.

Implications

It is encouraging that most younger teens are taking part in some kind of organized activity for youth either as a part of the school extracurricular program or through community programs or both. If one assumes that such participation is good for all youth, then those working with both sets of programs need to explore how more of the 6% who are not participating can become involved in some kind of activity. Program personnel who are wanting to recruit more eighth grader participants have to recognize that the pool of completely nonparticipant eighth graders is very small and is not associated with any one characteristic. For example, those wanting to recruit more ethnically diverse participants should not view youngsters from other than White heritage as unoccupied and just waiting to be recruited. Most are already involved

in other organized activities. That does not necessarily mean that they will not take on more activities if a program appeals to them and they feel comfortable within it.

It is also encouraging to see that neither ethnicity nor socio-economic status appear to make a difference in whether youngsters participate. However, special attention should be given to not "pricing youth programs out of the market" for youngsters from lower socio-economic status families. These youngsters may need the experiences more than others. It is also possible that some parents in this quartile do not recognize how such participation helps youngsters.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Using community resources showed considerable variation in the percent of comparisons yielding substantial differences. The lowest was 0% for region; the highest was 100% for socio-economic status.

Use of Resources – **Most eighth graders had made some use of community resources such as libraries, museums, and concerts or musical events. They were slightly more likely to have used such institutions than were their parents.**

Most eighth graders, 89%, used one or more community resources such as libraries, attended concerts and musical events, and museums. The range in the percent having used a specific resource was from 40% visiting art museums to 82% using a public library. The percentages of eighth graders who had visited or attended the other items were as follows: musical events, 65%; science museums, 54%; history museums, 52%. The range for parents was from 36% visiting art museums to 65% using the public library. The greatest difference in use by eighth graders came in relation to ethnicity and socio-economic status. Use increased as socio-economic status increased.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Did not use any of the five: Asian, 8% to 22% Native American	14
Used all five: Hispanic, 17% to 28% Asian	11
Socio-economic Status	
Used all five: lowest, 10% to 38% highest SES quartile	28
Did not use any of the five: lowest, 23% to 4% highest SES quartile	19
Family Type	
Did not use any of the five: both parents, 10% to 20% neither parent	10

Use of all of the individual community resources by eighth graders increased as socio-economic status increased, but the difference was greatest in relation to visiting science and history museums. Substantial differences (10 percentage points or more) related to ethnicity appeared for using the library, attending concerts, and visiting art museums. Rural students were somewhat less likely to be using community institutions than were those who lived in urban or suburban areas. However, only use of art and history museums and attendance of musical events showed substantial differences.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Went to the public library: Native American, 73% to 90% Asian	17
Attended musical event: Hispanic, 51% to 67% Black and White	16
Visited art museum: White, 39% to 52% Asian	13
Socio-economic Status	
Visited science museum: lowest, 33% to 74% highest SES quartile	41
Visited history museum: lowest, 32% to 71% highest SES quartile	39
Visited art museum: lowest, 28% to 55% highest SES quartile	27
Attended musical event: lowest, 51% to 78% highest SES quartile	27
Went to the public library: lowest, 70% to 91% highest SES quartile	21
Family Type	
Visited science museum: neither parent, 40% to 58% both parents	18
Visited history museum: neither parent, 38% to 55% both parents	17
Went to the public library: neither parent, 72% to 83% both parents	11
Sex of Student	
Attend musical event: boys 59%; 72% girls	13
Urbanicity	
Visited art museum: rural, 29% to 49% urban	20
Attended musical event: rural, 65% to 77% urban	12
Visited history museum: rural, 46% to 56% suburban	10
4-H	
Attended musical event: joiners, 56% to 73% leavers	17
Visited science museum: joiners, 47% to 63% leavers	16
Visited history museum: joiners, 42% to 54% stayers	12

Implications

It is very clear that community-provided resources such as libraries and museums are very important to younger teens. Yet, there is considerable variation in use. Use appeared to be associated with the parent or other adult's use. For most resources a few more youngsters than parents used the community resources. Socio-economic status was clearly related to use of such resources. It is likely that parents' education had more effect than did income. However, some of the youngsters in the lowest SES quartile used all five community resources, and some of the youth from the highest SES quartile did not use any. Volunteers who work with youth need to be aware that although some of those they work with have used various museums, others have not. Volunteers can encourage and help more youngsters to visit and use community resources.

READING AND VIEWING

Half of the socio-economic status and sex of student comparisons showed differences of 10 percentage points or more as compared with none for region and urbanicity.

Comparison – The eighth graders were much more likely to watch television than they were to do a lot of leisure reading.

About 80% of eighth graders did some reading outside of school, but few, 10%, read extensively (more than three hours per week). The percent reading three or more hours increased as socio-economic status increased. However, even within the highest SES quartile less than a third were reading extensively for pleasure. Girls were substantially more likely to be reading for pleasure than were boys, but, only a third of the girls said they spent three or more hours a week in nonschool reading.

Almost all eighth graders, 96%, watched television. Somewhat less than half, 45%, watched from 1 to 3 hours of television on weekdays. About a fourth watched four or more hours per day. There were differences in the percent watching television four or more hours per day when ethnicity, socio-economic status, and family type were examined.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Watch TV three or more hours per day: Asian, White, 40% to 64% Black	24
Socio-economic Status	
Watch TV three or more hours per day: lowest, 52% to 31% highest SES quartile	21
Read three or more hours for pleasure: lowest, 21% to 32% highest SES quartile	11
Family Type	
Watch TV three or more hours per day:	
both parents, or father/stepmother, 41% to 52% neither parent or single mother	11
Sex of Student	
Did not read outside school: girls 15%; 27% boys	12
Read three or more hours for pleasure: boys 21%; 33% girls	12
4-H	
Watch TV three or more hours per day: stayers, 38% to 48% joiners	10

Implications As one deals with a television generation, it is a dilemma to decide either to go with the trend and put educational content on video tapes rather than into print materials, or whether to emphasize print sources and encourage early teens to do more reading. There are many life skills that can be taught more easily through the use of video, which is multi-dimensional and provides real demonstrations, than through print materials.

However, the ability to read accurately, whether it be newspapers, the fine print on contracts, directions for operating an appliance, or other printed information, is needed throughout life. Are there ways in which nonschool programs can encourage youngsters to perfect their reading skills through problems or contests which require youngsters to read extensively? Can nonschool programs devise "fun" type activities related to young teen interest areas which help poor readers increase their skills?

Some people automatically will interpret a high amount of time viewing television negatively. High amounts of television watching per day may be a detriment in that it keeps younger teens passive and interferes with them developing motor, social, and mental skills. Yet, television itself can either be a good source of learning or a poor source depending upon the kinds of programs available. How parents or other adults help teens interpret what is seen is important.

WORK FOR PAY

There was very little difference in relation to working for pay. The highest percent of difference, 25%, appeared for ethnicity and the lowest percent, 0%, appeared for region, urbanicity, and socio-economic status.

Amount of Work – By the time boys and girls reach the eighth grade, most want to earn some money of their own. Many worked at least a few hours a week.

Four out of five eighth graders had worked for pay sometime during the year. (Household chores were excluded from these questions). About two-thirds of eight graders had worked one or more hours per week

at a paid job. Most had worked fewer than five hours per week. However, 14% worked 11 or more hours per week. Babysitting, 33%, and lawn work, 15%, were the most often mentioned jobs for pay followed by newspaper route, 5%; farm or agricultural work, 5%; and odd jobs, 5%.

There were gender differences with girls more likely to babysit and boys more likely to do lawn work. Whites, 74%, were more likely and Asians, 53%, least likely to be working for pay. White eighth graders were more likely to be earning money through child care and Asians were least likely to be doing so. Little difference appeared related to socio-economic status. In fact, there was a slight tendency for those in the highest quartile to be more likely to be working than those in the lowest quartile. Therefore, it would appear that work was an option rather than a necessity for most eight graders. Work may have been encouraged by some parents for the purpose of giving experience and taken up by some younger teens as a means of securing money under their own control.

Working did not seem to interfere with participating in nonschool activities. For example, youngsters who stayed in 4-H in the eighth grade, 75%, were slightly more likely to be working for pay than were those who left 4-H before the eighth grade, 73%. Those who stayed in 4-H also showed a higher percentage working 10 or more hours, 18%, than did those who had never been in 4-H, 13%.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Work for pay: Asian, 53% to 74% White	21
Work more than 10 hours per week: Asian, 8% to 20% Native American	12
Babysitting/child care: Asian, 23% to 35% White	12
Family Type	
Babysitting/child care: father, 25% to 36% mother/stepfather	11
Sex of Student	
Babysitting/child care: boys 6%; 58% girls	52
Lawnwork: girls 2%; 27% boys	25
4-H	
Babysitting/child care: joiners, 27% to 39% leavers	12
Farm work: leavers and joiners, 4% to 15% stayers	11

Implications

Because many younger teens are interested in earning money and some youngsters really need to do so, those working with nonschool programs may want to give more attention to how such programs can help youth earn money. This can be done through cooperative businesses or other entrepreneurial activities. It is important to help youngsters build the kinds of skills which will help them secure the best paying jobs available to them at this age. The fact that youngsters work for pay will not automatically eliminate them from taking part in nonschool programs. However, it will make it more difficult to find times for groups of youngsters to meet.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

This section includes two areas, parent guidance and parent participation. Ethnicity appeared most related to parental guidance. Socio-economic status seemed to make quite a bit of difference in the extent to which parents participated in activities related to the school.

PARENT GUIDANCE

Ethnicity showed the highest percent of comparisons of 10 or more percentage point difference, 61%. Sex of student showed no differences of 10 percentage points or more.

Rules – **Most parents said they had rules their eighth grader was expected to follow. This was true regardless of ethnicity, socio-economic status, family composition or sex of student.**

Almost all parents said they had rules about doing household chores, 90%, and doing homework, 92%. Many, 73%, said they had rules about maintaining a certain grade average.

One of the items, rules about chores, showed a substantial difference related to ethnicity. Another, rules about grade point average showed a substantial difference when responses were examined by type of family. However, in both cases even the lower percentage was over two-thirds, indicating that most parents thought they had rules for their eighth graders.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Rules about household chores: Asian, 81% to 94% Black and Native American	13
Family Type	
Rules about grade average: single fathers, 70% to 80% mother/stepfather	10

Most parents of eighth graders also had rules for watching television. Parents were most likely, 89%, to have a rule about how early or late the eighth grader could watch television. They were least likely, 42%, to have a rule about the overall number of hours for viewing. About three-fifths of parents said they had rules about the number of hours of TV watched on school days and slightly more than two-thirds had rules about the programs that could be watched.

White parents were more likely to have rules on the programs that could be watched and less likely to have rules about the number of hours on school days and overall number of hours watched. Black parents were somewhat more likely than other ethnic groups to have rules about the number of hours on school days and overall number of hours watched.

Parents in the lowest socio-economic quartile were least likely to limit the amount of time their eighth grader spent watching television and were least likely to monitor the kind of programs watched. Families with both parents were most likely to limit the number of hours of viewing. Rural parents were somewhat more likely to limit the number of hours their eighth grader could watch television.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Hours watching TV on school days: White, 58% to 75% Black	17
Total hours of TV watching: White, 38% to 52% Black	14
Programs watched: Native American, 58% to 70% Black and White	12
Never limit time spent watching TV: Asian, 23% to 41% Native American	18
Often limit time spent watching TV: White, 13% to 24% Asian	11
Socio-economic Status	
Never limit time spent watching TV: lowest, 45% to 27% highest SES quartile	18
Programs watched: lowest, 60% to 73% highest SES quartile	13
Family Type	
Programs watched: single fathers, 57% to 72% both parents	15
Never limit time spent watching TV: both parents 34% to 47% single father	13
Urbanicity	
Never limit time spent watching TV: urban, 16% to 35% rural	19
4-H	
Never limit time spent watching TV: stayers, 30% to 40% joiners	10

Implications

Individuals of this age, while gaining new freedoms, still have rules they are expected to follow. Nearly every aspect of life in our society has some formal or informal rules that must be followed. Helping young adolescents follow rules for work and behavior sets a pattern for lifelong self-discipline.

Monitoring – However, according to eighth graders, parents do not always monitor to see that the rules were being followed.

Less than half, 45%, said that their parents often checked whether their homework was done. Over a fourth, 26%, said that their parents rarely or never checked that they had completed their homework. Less than half, 42%, often limited the amount of time they spent going out with friends. Over a fourth, 27%, said their parents rarely or never placed such limits on them. Almost two-thirds, 63%, said that their parents rarely or never restricted the amount of time spent watching television. Only 14% said that their parents often restricted the amount of time spent watching television. Two-thirds, 67%, said their parents often required that they do chores. Ten percent said their parents rarely or never expected them to do chores. The remainder, 23%, said sometimes.

Chores and TV were the two items that showed substantial differences related to variables. Differences in relation to monitoring whether homework was completed and limiting going out did not reach 10 percentage point differences. There were differences related to ethnicity for most items but no sustained pattern that parents of one ethnic heritage were more likely to monitor their eighth graders than were others. Family type showed substantial differences on three items.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Often required to do chores: Asians, 61% to 75% Blacks	14
Often monitor TV: Whites, 13% to 24% Asians	11
Never monitor TV: Asians, 23% to 41% Native Americans	18
Socio-economic Status	
Never monitor TV: lowest, 45% to 27% highest SES quartile	18
Family Type	
Often required to do chores: single father, 65% to 78% father/stepmother	13
Never monitor TV: both parents, 34% to 47% single father	13
Often monitor going out: single father, 33% to 49% father/stepmother	16
4-H	
Never monitor TV: stayers, 30% to 40% joiners	10

Implications

It is likely that having rules and monitoring compliance differs with the parenting style and personalities of the parents rather than with demographic characteristics such as ethnicity or socio-economic status. As a result, care should be taken not to form stereotypes of the extent to which any group of parents do or do not maintain rules for their younger teens.

The findings in the previous section about how many youngsters go to school without their homework done indicate that unless parents can instill more responsibility toward homework in their teens, they probably should continue to monitor whether watching television is interfering with completion of homework.

In the national satellite program, Raising Responsible Teens, which was broadcast in May of 1993, J. D. Hawkins emphasized the importance of parents taking an active role in monitoring their children's behavior. The NELS findings suggest that parenting programs may want to give more attention to the importance of monitoring and ways to monitor effectively without damaging relations and causing rebellion.

Homework – Many parents help eighth graders with homework.

Somewhat less than three-fourths of the parents, 70%, said they helped their eighth grader with homework at least once or twice a month. About 10% said they helped with homework almost every day, 32% once or twice a week, and 28% once or twice a month. Ethnicity, socio-economic status, and family type showed substantial differences. When socio-economic status was examined within ethnic groups, the percent saying they helped with homework at least once a week increased as SES increased and the percent saying they seldom or never helped with homework decreased as SES increased within all ethnic groups.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Seldom or never help with homework: White, 27% to 41% Hispanic	14
At least once a week: Black, 47% to 37% Hispanic	10
Socio-economic Status	
Seldom or never: highest, 22% to 42% lowest SES quartile	20
Family Type	
Seldom or never: both parents, 27% to 38% someone else	11

Implications

The nature of the help provided is not included in the survey. Some might interpret this question to mean helping them settle down and accomplish it. Others might interpret it as meaning providing general strategy for tackling a homework problem. Still others might mean actually knowing the content of eighth grade courses well enough to answer questions or guide the eighth grader in dealing with specifics. Providing that last kind of help might be most difficult for parents who themselves have had little education or for older guardians who completed the eighth grade several years ago. Perhaps those working with youth groups could do more to help parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds to better understand what their youngsters should be learning.

Trust – Most students seem to think their parents trust them. Few think they abdicate their decision making responsibilities to their parents. However, it would appear that from a fourth to a fifth of eighth graders may have some difficulty in relating to their parents.

The majority, 78%, felt their parents trusted them. The approximately one-fifth who said the statement was false apparently did not feel trusted. Some, 29%, felt they usually did not understand why their parents told them to do something. Some, 22%, also they relied on their parents to solve many of their problems.

Responses to these three questions did not differ substantially according to socio-economic status. Understanding parent's reasons and dependence on parents for solving problems showed differences related to ethnicity. There were differences in trust related to family type.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Did not understand parents' reasons: Black, 25% to 37% Native American	12
Counted on their parents to solve their problems: White, 20% to 31% Hispanic	11
Family Type	
Trust student to do what is expected: father/stepmother, 68% to 80% both parents	12
4-H	
Did not understand parents' reasons: stayers, 25% to 35% joiners	10

Implications

The information can be read in different ways. But because there were only three questions in the survey that related to relationship, it should be considered as presenting hypotheses rather than firm facts. It would appear however, that about one in five eighth graders did not feel trusted by their parents, did not understand the parents' reasoning, and/or was dependent upon parents to solve many of their problems. If this is true, what effect might any one of these feelings have on how the youngster relates to adults in nonschool programs?

Parent Connections – **Most parents said they knew the parents of their children's friends. Fewer, however, were in nonschool organizations with parents of other eighth graders.**

The percentage of parents knowing the parents of their eighth grader's friends decreased from 84% for the first named friend to 70% for the fifth named friend. (The middle ground, third friend, was used for our comparisons.) A fourth of the parents said that they belonged to an organization other than PTO with other parents of eighth graders.

White parents were more likely to have connections to other parents than were those of other heritages. There was a marked difference in connectedness related to socio-economic status. White parents were more likely to know other parents appeared when socio-economic status was held constant. The exception came in relation to those in the lowest SES quartile belonging to organizations with other parents. Parents with both natural or adoptive parents present were most likely, and fathers and stepmothers were least likely to be in contact with other parents.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Knew parents of student's third friend: Native American, 28% to 57% White	29
In organization with other parents: Hispanic, 15% to 29% White	14
Socio-economic Status	
Knew parents of student's third friend: lowest, 35% to 64% highest SES quartile	29
In organization with other parents: lowest, 11% to 41% highest SES quartile	30
Family Type	
Knew parents of student's third friend: father/stepmother, 35% to 56% both parents	21
In organization with other parents: father/stepmother, 14% to 31% both parents	17
4-H	
Knew parents of student's third friend: joiners, 49% to 62% stayers	13
In organization with other parents: joiners, 21% to 34% stayers	13

Implications

Those who work with nonschool programs need to understand how likely it is that the parents of those taking part in a program will know each other. That understanding is important in terms of little things like planning introductions and ice breakers at parent programs, and in bigger things like whether or not one can count on information related to the program spreading among parents in a natural way.

PARENT PARTICIPATION

The NELS:88 survey of parents explored the extent to which they attended school activities, PTO participation and contacts with the school. Parents' participation showed considerable range from 0% of the comparisons by sex of student and region to 100% of the comparisons by socio-economic status showing a 10 or more percentage point difference.

School Activities – Some parents took an active part in school activities. Many did not. Socio-economic status appeared to make a substantial difference in terms of whether parents attended events and visited eighth grade classes.

According to the eighth graders, three-fifths of the parents had attended an event at school such as a "play, concert, gym exhibit, sports competition, honor ceremony, or science fair" where the eighth grader participated. About the same percent had phoned or spoken to a teacher or counselor. About half had attended a school meeting and over a fourth, 29%, had visited classes.

There were substantial differences by ethnicity but no clear pattern. For example, White eighth graders had the highest percent saying their parents had attended an event at school in which the youngster had participated, and also in saying their parents had attended a school meeting. Yet, Whites were least likely to have visited classes. Black parents showed the highest percent having talked to a teacher or counselor.

As SES increas[illegible]ontact with school increased. The greatest difference appeared in relation to attending events in which [illegible]ir youngsters participated. The least difference appeared in relation to attending classes. In most instances, within each ethnic group participation increased as SES quartile increased. The exceptions were Black participation in classes and contacting teachers or counselors, and for Native Americans, activities other than attending school meetings. In most instances their were substantial differences between lowest and highest SES quartile in percent participating. The greatest difference appeared for White parent's participating in school meetings, a difference of 31 percentage points. The least difference appeared in terms of Hispanic parents visiting classes, six percentage points.

Black parents were most likely to have contacted a school counselor or teacher and Asians were least likely to have done so. Those from the highest SES quartile and those living with both parents were more likely to have contacted a counselor or teacher than were others.

Eighth graders living with both natural or adoptive parents were somewhat more likely to say their parents attended an event at school or attended a school meeting than were those living in other family types.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More
(Student said their parents had...)

Ethnicity	PPD
Attended school event: Native American, 48% to 66% White	18
Attended classes: White, 26% to 36% Black	10
Phoned/spoken to teacher/counselor: Asian, 48% to 68% Black	20
Socio-economic Status	
Attended school event: lowest, 44% to 74% highest SES quartile	30
Attend school meeting: lowest, 37% to 64% highest SES quartile	27
Phoned/spoken to teacher/counselor: lowest, 53% to 66% highest SES quartile	13
Family Type	
Attended school event: neither, 43% to 66% both parents	23
Attended school meeting: neither, 39% to 54% both parents	15
Urbanicity	
Attended school event: urban, 54% to 67% rural	13
Phoned/spoken to teacher/counselor: rural, 54% to 64% urban	10
Region	
Attended school event: South/West, 57% to 70% North Central	13
4-H	
Attended school event: joiners, 58% to 75% of stayers	17

This was one of the few instances which showed differences both in relation to urbanicity and region. Urban parents were most likely to have phoned or spoken to a teacher or counselor. Rural parents were most likely to have attended school events. Southern and Western parents were least likely to have attended school events.

Implications

The image of the parent interested in attending school events holds for some families in all ethnic and socio-economic groups, but not for others. It is likely this same pattern of difference in attendance will appear in relation to activities of nonschool youth programs.

Although some youth may be uncomfortable if their parents attend events and classes, or contact their teachers, others may be pleased that parents take that much time and show that much interest. Schools may need to make special efforts to make parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds more comfortable in attending school activities.

PTO – **Parents were even less likely to take part in volunteer activities than to attend events and classes. Again socio-economic status and place of residence made some difference, but participation was only moderate even among the groups most likely to take part.**

Almost a third of the eighth grade parents, 32%, belonged to parent-teacher organizations (PTO). Slightly more, 36%, attended parent-teacher organization meetings. About a fourth were active in the activities of such organizations. About one in five parents served as a volunteer at the eighth graders school.

There were differences related to ethnic background. Hispanics were least and Whites were most likely to belong to a parent-teacher organization. Whites were least likely and Blacks were most likely to attend parent-teacher organization meetings. Whites were most likely to volunteer at school and Blacks were least likely to do so.

Although at least one parent in every ten was involved regardless of SES status, there was a marked trend for involvement to increase as SES quartile increased. It is to be noted, however, that far fewer than half of even the top SES quartile parents were actively involved in school activities. Involvement increased as SES quartile increased for all ethnic groups except Native Americans.

Even where both natural parents were most likely to be involved with PTO, less than 40% of them were active. Single parent families, natural parent with a partner, and foster parents or guardians were fairly similar in their participation patterns. Although parents from families where both parents were present were most likely to volunteer at school, less than a fourth did so.

Urban parents were somewhat less likely to attend PTO meetings than were rural or suburban parents.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More

Ethnicity	PPD
Belong to PTO: Hispanic, 17% to 34% White	17
Attend PTO meetings: White, 33% to 47% Black	14
Socio-economic Status	
Belong to PTO: lowest, 12% to 54% highest SES quartile	42
Take part in PTO activities: lowest, 14% to 39% highest SES quartile	25
Attend PTO meetings: lowest, 29% to 44% highest SES quartile	15
Volunteered at school: lowest, 10% to 29% highest SES quartile	19

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More (continued)

Family Type	
Belong to PTO: neither, father/stepmother, 19% to 36% both parents	17
Attend PTO meetings: single father, father/stepmother, 24% to 39% both parents	15
Take part in PTO activities: neither, father/stepmother, 16% to 29% both parents	13
Volunteered at school: father/stepmother, neither, 10% to 23% both parents	13
Urbanicity	
Attend PTO meetings: rural, 31% to 45% urban	14

Implications

Understanding the extent to which parents are actively related to school gives a better understanding of the extent to which parents may become actively involved in nonschool programs. Involvement and communication with parents is a constant struggle. Most parents have a need to know what is going on both in school and in nonschool programs. Likewise the school and other programs want and seek help from parents.

Contacted by the school – Schools did not appear to maintain regular contacts with all parents.

Either schools did not make an effort to contact parents or many students did not give the communication to parent. Slightly more than half, 55%, of parents indicated they had been contacted one or more times by the school about their eighth grader's academic performance. Fewer parents were contacted one or more times about course selection, 40%, academic program for the year, 35%, and placement decisions related to the academic program, 30%. Less than one-half of eighth grader'sparents had been contacted by the school for information for records, 42% for help with fund raising, 42%, and for volunteer work, 29%. About one-third of parents of eighth graders said they had been contacted during the school year about their student's behavior.

White parents and parents in the highest SES quartile were more likely to have been contacted by schools than were others. Schools in the South were somewhat less likely to have contacted parents about academic areas than were schools in other regions. Two items showed substantial differences related to family type. Boys' parents were more likely to have been contacted about behavior and academic performnance than were girls.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More
(School contacted parent about...)

Ethnicity	PPD
Course selection: Native American, 27% to 42% White	15
Behavior: Asian, 23% to 45% Black	22
Academic performance: Native American, 62% to 50% Asian and Black	12
Information for records: Hispanic, 37% to 48% White	11
Fund-raising: Hispanic, 32% to 42% White	10
Volunteering: Hispanic, 21% to 31% White	10
Socio-economic Status	
Academic performance: lowest, 38% to 62% highest SES quartile	24
Behavior: lowest, 35% to 25% highest SES quartile	10
Information for records: lowest, 38% to 51% highest SES quartile	13
Fund-raising: lowest, 29% to 53% highest SES quartile	24
Volunteering: lowest, 17% to 44% highest SES quartile	27
Family Type	
Course selection: neither parent, 27% to 42% both parents	15
Academic program: neither parent, 30% to 40% single fathers	10

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More (continued)

Sex of Student	
Behavior: girls 23%; 39% boys	16
Academic performance: boys 61%; 49% girls	12
Region	
Course selection: South, 33% to 52% Northeast	19
Placement decision: South, 24% to 40% Northeast	16
Academic program: South, 30% to 41% West	11
4-H	
Behavior: leavers, 24% to 40% joiners	16
Academic performance: leavers, 48% to 58% joiners	10
Information for records: stayers, 40% to 50% leavers	10
Fund raising: joiners, 36% to 46% stayers	10

Parents Contacting Schools – Some parents from all demographic groups had contacted the school, but often that number was fewer than half.

Over half of the parents, 53%, had contacted the school about their eighth grader's performance. Over a third, 35%, had made at least one contact about their eighth grader's academic program. Somewhat over a fourth, 29%, had made a contact about their eighth grader's behavior.

Relatively few parents contacted the school for something which was not directly related to their child's school life. About two parents in five had contacted the school with information for school records. One in five contacted the school either about fund raising or doing volunteer work at school.

Some parents of all ethnic heritages contacted their eighth grader's schools to see how they could help their child or the school. Only the contacts with information for school records showed a substantial difference. Parents from the highest socio-economic quartile were most likely and those from the lowest quartile least likely to contact the school for most of the reasons explored. Even though this was the case, less than half of the families from the highest quartile contacted the school for the purposes explored in the study.

Parents of boys were somewhat more likely to have contacted the school than were parents of girls. Families made up of both original parents, natural or adoptive, were the least likely to contact the school about their eighth grader's behavior. Southern parents were least likely and Western parents most likely to contact the school about eighth grader's academic performance.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More
(Parent had contacted school about...)

Ethnicity	PPD
Behavior: Asian, 20% to 42% Native American	22
Academic performance: Asian, 41% to 55% Native American	14
Information for records: Hispanic, 33% to 45% Native American	12
Socio-economic Status	
Academic performance: lowest, 38% to 62% highest SES quartile	24
Academic program: lowest, 24% to 44% highest SES quartile	20
Information for records: lowest, 32% to 44% highest SES quartile	12
Fundraising: lowest, 13% to 28% highest SES quartile	15
Volunteering: lowest, 9% to 31% highest SES quartile	22
Family Type	
Behavior: both parents, 26% to 40% father/stepmother	14

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of 10 Percentage Points or More (continued)

Sex of Student	
Behavior: girls 23%; 36% boys	13
Academic performance: girls 46%; 59% boys	13
Region	
Academic performance: South, 47% to 57% West	10
4-H	
Behavior: leavers, 15% to 36% joiners	21
Volunteering: joiners, 15% to 25% stayers	10

Implications

Information about the extent to which parents contact a school may be of interest to those working with youth in nonschool programs as it provides a general background of the extent to which parents are in communication with the school which their eighth grader attends. The extent to which parents of eighth graders initiate contact with the school may give some indication of the extent to which they may initiate contacts with a youth group to assist either with fund raising or volunteering. To some extent, this finding can be reassuring to those who work with informal programs and are concerned when parents do not step forward and volunteer help. Their situation is not different from that faced by many schools. It also could be a sign that youngsters need to learn more about the importance of supporting schools and other community institutions in such a way that they will be more active supporters when they are adults. Those developing parenting education programs may want to give special attention to encouraging parents to be actively involved with the schools their children attend.

Communication between the school and parents is a two-way street. It appears there is some travel on this street but it could bear a lot more. This is also true with those working with informal youth programs. They can work to increase communication between themselves and parents. Those working with informal youth programs may provide a model of volunteer recruitment, training and recognition for schools to follow

PART III: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

The previous section showed percentage point differences in ranges according to specific content areas. This section summarizes those differences.

METHODOLOGY

In the first stage of our work, we developed a series of 87 single topic reports which included information on all of the responses across subgroups for each of the seven major variables used in this study. When we tried to put all of the ranges into this report, we found that it was overwhelming.

Amount of Difference

We felt we should attempt to cut down on the volume and detail. To do so, we first decided to include only the range across subgroups, the highest and lowest percentages. Then we decided to look at the amount of difference in the range. We arbitrarily chose **a difference of 10 or more percentage points**. In some instances such a difference does appear to have real-life significance. However, in others it does not. But it does give you, the reader, information about where subgroups were least alike. At times this percentage difference will be referred to as a **substantial difference**. The tables in the previous section showed **PPD (Percentage Point Difference)** heading a column at the right.

> Example: When we looked at region, we found that the percent of eighth graders living in a home that usually used a language other than English ranged from a low of 5% for North Central to a high of 23% for Western eighth graders. The difference between these two regions was 18 percentage points (PPD) and thus we pointed it out as a substantial difference.

With a smaller data set we would have used a chi-square test of significance. However, the chi-square test of significant difference (difference due to something other than chance) is most sensitive with samples of 100 or fewer. When applied to a data set weighted to three million, most comparisons showed high relationships, significant at the .0000 level. Perhaps this is because among three million eighth graders, a 1% difference of 30,000 is a large difference. However, reporting that everything was significant does not help the reader sort out where the greatest difference lies.

This section summarizes the findings in terms of number of instances and the areas which were most likely to show substantial differences.

Clustering of Comparisons

Most of the 439 comparisons made on each variable were related to a specific question or topics. For example, we looked at what percent said they had VCRs at home or quartile on a self-concept index. In some instances we examined subgroups within a question/topic, for example, the percentage in the top test quartile and percentage in the lowest test quartile. In some instances we examined by variable the range in total count of something like nonschool activities, and also examined individual items by variable such as the percentage participating in Scouts, and percentage participating in nonschool sports.

It is hard to deal with 439 individual comparisons. There is so much detail that it is hard to find meaning. Therefore, as in the first part of this report, we arbitrarily clustered comparisons into groups such as family variables, views of self, nonschool activities, school extracurricular activities, school success, and school risk indicators. Then we grouped these clusters into five main categories - characteristics, eighth graders, school, life skill development activities, and parental involvement. The categories, clusters and number of items are given in the next table.

As is apparent from the table, the number of items in a cluster varied. For example, there was only one comparison in health risks. At the other extreme, the NELS developers had included several questions on communication, especially in relation to planning high school programs, and we made 48 comparisons on items involving communication between eighth graders and others.

Number of Comparisons Made by Category and Subcategory

CHARACTERISTICS 87		**EIGHTH GRADERS** 132	
Demographics	28	Age and Special Needs	8
Households	24	Future Expectations	39
Family Risk Factors (NELS)	8	Views of Self	36
After School	16	Communication	48
Home Resources	11	Health Risk--Smoking	1
SCHOOL 93			
Opinions About School	26	**LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES** 87	
School Success	29	School Courses	13
School Risk Indicators	2	Nonschool Classes	9
Orientation To Subjects	19	School Extracurricular	28
School Behavior	17	Nonschool Activities	11
		General Participation	3
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT 40		Community Resources	7
Parent Guidance	23	Reading and Viewing	4
Parent Participation	17	Work for Pay	12

EXTENT OF SIMILARITY AND DIFFERENCE

Eighth graders across the country are more similar than different when these major variables were examined. About three-fourths of the comparisons showed ranges of less than 10 percentage points. Twenty-six percent of the 3,073 comparisons (439 items X 7 variables) showed a percentage difference of 10 percentage points or more. Within that 26%, only 7% showed a difference of 20 or more percentage points.

Number and Percent of 3,073 Comparisons
Yielding Differences Of Various Percentage Points

PPD	Number of Items	Percent of Total
0-9	2,293	74%
10-19	541	18%
20-29	136	4%
30-39	47	2%
40-49	13	.4%
50+	43	1%

Largest Differences

Very few differences of 50 or more percentage points appeared in relation to the areas we were studying. The really large differences appeared when ethnicity, socio-economic status, region, urbanicity, and 4-H participation were interrelated. Those differences are included in the APPENDIX which examines the relationships among the seven key variables. Among the other areas, religion and minority language also showed considerable difference related to ethnicity. NELS risk factors showed sizeable differences related to socio-economic status and family type.

Differences of 50 Percentage Points or More

	PPD
Ethnicity	
Minority language used in the home: White, 3% to 63% Hispanic	60
Catholic: Black, 8% to 70% Hispanic	62
Baptist: Hispanic, 6% to 60% Black	54
Socio-economic status	
Parents with college degree: lowest, 3% to 83% highest SES quartile	80
Family income under $15,000: lowest, 62% to 1% highest SES quartile	61
Family income $50,000 or over: lowest, 1% to 58% highest SES quartile	57
No NELS family risk factors: lowest, 18% to 78% highest SES quartile	60
Three or more NELS family risk factors: lowest, 3% to 53% highest SES quartile	50
Family type	
No NELS family risk factors: single mothers and fathers, 0% to 71% both parents	71
Three or more NELS family risk factors: both parents, 8% to 63% single mothers	55
Sex of student	
Babysitting/child care for pay: boys, 6%; 58% girls	52

Specific Items That Showed Little or No Difference

Many items showed no difference in relation to any of the seven variables used in this study. Because knowing what did not show a difference is as important as what does show a difference, items which showed little or no differences are listed in the table that follows.

Items Which Showed Little or No Difference
(Please read across within each category)

Characteristics

After School		
Usually no one at home	Mother never home	Mother usually home
Father home	Younger brother/sister home	Older brother/sister home
Other adult relative home	Adult neighbor home	Sitter home
Where: Home	At sports	At extracurricular
At community program	Friend's House	Relative's House
Neighbor's House		

Eighth Graders

Age and Special Needs		
One or more problems:	Emotional	Learning
Hearing	Sight	Other health
Special education		
Future Expectations - Occupation when 30		
Science/engineering	Owning a business	Technical
Service	Craftsperson	Sales
Housewife/homemaker	Farmer	Laborer
Other	Don't know	

Items Which Showed Little or No Difference (continued)

Life Skill Development Activities

School Courses

Phy Ed	Music	Art
Computer	Foreign Language	Shop
Home Ec	Religious Ed	Sex Ed
Typing	Drama/speech	Consumer Ed
Agriculture		

Nonschool Classes

At least one	Religion	Music
Dance	Computer	Art
Language	History of Culture	Other

School Extracurricular

None	Many	At least one club
Science fair	History club	Science club
Computer club	Math club	Voc Ed club
Foreign language club	History club	Other club
At least one communication	Yearbook	Newspaper
Drama	Debate/speech	
At least one music	Band/orchestra	Chorus/choir
Dance		
At least one sport	Varsity	Intramural
Cheerleading		
Student Council	Honor society	Religious group

General Participation

No participation in either	Officer-nonschool	Officer-extracurricular

Work for Pay

Lawn work	Newspaper route	Farm
Odd jobs	Sales	Clerical
Waitress	Other labor	Other

School

Opinions about School

Teachers/students get along	Disruption of learning	Good teaching
Students get away with a lot	School spirit	Strictness
Teachers interested in students	Fairness	Not safe

Parental Involvement

Parent Guidance

Rules: About homework	About chores	About grade point
Rules about TV: Lateness	Programs watched	Amount on weekdays
Overall number of hours		
Parents trust me	Don't understand why	Parents solve problems
Parents monitor:		
Chores often/never	Homework often/never	Watching TV often/never
Time with friends often/never		
Phone a teacher or counselor		

Items Which Showed Little or No Difference (continued)

Organization with other parents | Know parent of third friend

Parent Participation

Attend PTO	Belong to PTO	PTO activities
Volunteer	Attended school meeting	Visited class
Attend event		

Variables That Made the Least or Most Difference

On the advice of the project's advisory committee, the information was examined in relation to seven variables - ethnicity, socio-economic status, family type, sex of student, urbanicity, region, and 4-H participation. It was expected that the sex of student, urbanicity, and region might show as many differences as ethnicity and socio-economic status. However, the findings were surprising.

Least Difference. **Region** did not seem to make much difference. Only 7% of the comparisons showed differences of ten percentage points or more. **Urbanicity** (urban or central city; suburban or other areas in a metropolitan area; and rural, or areas outside of a metropolitan area) seemed to make very little difference either to eighth graders' characteristics or to their performance and views. Only 8% of the comparisons showed differences of ten percentage points or more. Less than one comparison in ten, reached or exceeded 10 percentage points when **sex of student** was examined.

Number and Percent Out of 439 Comparisons Yielding Differences of 10 Percentage Points or More

	Number	Percent
Region	29	7%
Urbanicity	35	8%
Sex of Student	41	9%
Family Type	134	31%
4-H Participation	159	36%
Socio-economic Status	167	38%
Ethnicity	223	51%

Moderate Difference. Less than a third, 31%, of the comparisons made in relation to **family type** showed differences of 10 or more percentage points. About a third of the comparisons made in relation to **participation in 4-H** showed differences at this level. In most instances differences between those who had and had not been in 4-H were small. The greater difference was between those who were considered new joiners - those who said they were in 4-H in the eighth grade but whose parents did not say they had ever been in 4-H. **Socio-economic status** showed the second greatest number of differences of 10 percentage points or more. Somewhat more than a third of the comparisons, 38%, showed this kind of difference.

Most Difference. The greatest number of differences at or above the 10 percentage point level appeared in relation to **ethnicity**, but even then only slightly more than half, 51%, were this great.

While ethnicity had a higher percentage of all comparisons showing differences of ten percentage points or more, the socio-economic status differences at 38% were more likely to be "deeper". As will be seen in the table on the next page, only 13% of the ethnicity differences were 20 percentage points or more as compared with 18% of the socio-economic status differences.

Number out of 439 Comparisons Yielding Differences of Various Percentages Points

	Percentage points difference				Total 10 or More		
	50+	40-49	30-39	20-29	10-19	Number	%
VARIABLES							
Ethnicity	14	2	10	32	165	223	51%
Socio-economic Status	5	6	20	48	88	167	38%
Family Type	6	4	3	17	104	134	31%
Sex of Student	1	0	0	5	29	35	8%
Urbanicity	0	0	6	5	24	35	8%
Region	1	0	4	4	20	29	7%
4-H participation	16	1	4	25	111	157	36%
Total	43	13	47	136	541	780	
% of 3,073	1%	.4%	2%	4%	18%	25%	

Relationship Among Key Variables

There was a fairly substantial relationship between ethnicity and socio-economic status. For example, ethnicity groups other than White made up 48% of the lowest SES quartile and only 15% of the highest quartile. Conversely, Whites made up 52% of the lowest SES quartile and 85% of the highest quartile.

Family type was related to ethnicity and socio-economic status. For example, 78% of the eighth graders of Asian heritage lived with both natural or adoptive parents as compared with 38% of the Black youngsters. The percent in single-family homes (usually, but not always with the mother) ranged from 10% of eighth graders of Asian to 38% of eighth graders of Black heritage. There was little difference across ethnicity and socio-economic status in terms of the percent of eighth graders living with someone other than either parent, a range from 2% of White to 8% of Black eighth graders.

Fifty percent of the eighth graders in the lowest socio-economic status quartile were living with both parents as compared with 78% of those in the highest quartile. Twenty-nine percent of those in the lowest SES quartile were living with only one parent as compared with 11% of those in the highest SES quartile. The percentage living with someone other than a natural or adoptive parent ranged from 6% of those in the lowest quartile to 2% of those in the highest two quartiles. More details are given in the Appendix.

Areas Where The Greatest Number of Substantial Differences Appeared

The greatest percentage of substantial differences (10 or more percentage point difference in range between highest and lowest group) appeared related to characteristics of families and homes. The smallest percentage of substantial differences appeared in relation to the eighth graders which included the areas of future expectations, views of self, and communication patterns. Variance in these areas seemed to stem from something other than the demographic variables included in this analysis.

Percent of Comparisons By Major Categories
Showing 10 or More Percentage Points of Difference

	Number	Total x 7	Number 10 or more	Percent 10 or more
CHARACTERISTICS	87	609	207	34%
SCHOOL	93	651	190	29%
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	40	280	79	28%
LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES	87	609	135	22%
EIGHTH GRADERS	132	924	177	19%

Differences According to Eighth Graders' Characteristics

The table that follows shows the percent of comparison by topic and variables which yielded differences of 10 percentage points or more. This percentage was found by taking the total number of comparisons and dividing it into the number of comparisons which showed a difference in the range of 10 or more percentage points. As one reads across the first row, it is apparent that the percent of comparisons on demographic items yielding differences of 10 percentage points or more differed dramatically according to variable. For example, 75% of the 4-H and 68% of the ethnic demographic yielded differences as compared with 0% of the sex of student comparisons on the same demographic items.

Reading down the columns it is clear that a variable seemed to make a difference with some content areas but not with others. For example, ethnicity showed high percentages of substantial comparisons related to demographics, communication, and school success, but few differences related to smoking, general participation and participation in extracurricular activities.

Percent of Comparisons With Difference of 10 Or More Percentage Points

	Number	Ethnicity	SES	Family	Sex	Urbanicity	Region	4-H
CHARACTERISTICS 87								
Demographics	28	68%	54%	54%	0%	57%	60%	75%
Households	24	50%	33%	17%	0%	8%	0%	17%
Family Risk Factors	8	63%	88%	63%	0%	25%	15%	75%
After School	16	31%	19%	44%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Home Resources	11	91%	91%	82%	18%	9%	0%	36%
EIGHTH GRADERS 132								
Age and Special Needs	8	13%	13%	25%	13%	0%	0%	13%
Future Expectations	39	21%	28%	10%	5%	0%	5%	5%
Views of Self	36	42%	36%	22%	19%	0%	3%	28%
Communication	48	65%	38%	35%	10%	2%	0%	33%
Health Risk--Smoking	1	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
SCHOOL 93								
Opinions About School	26	58%	8%	15%	4%	0%	4%	19%
School Success	29	86%	79%	66%	17%	10%	0%	62%
School Risk Indicators	2	100%	0%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%
Orientation To Subjects	19	58%	11%	0%	5%	0%	0%	37%
School Behavior	17	71%	35%	59%	47%	6%	6%	47%
LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 87								
School Courses	13	23%	15%	15%	8%	0%	0%	23%
Nonschool Classes	9	44%	67%	33%	22%	0%	0%	33%
School Extracurricular	28	18%	18%	4%	11%	0%	4%	86%
Nonschool Activities	11	73%	36%	9%	0%	18%	13%	91%
General Participation	3	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	67%
Community Resources	7	71%	100%	57%	14%	43%	0%	43%
Reading and Viewing	4	25%	50%	25%	50%	0%	0%	25%
Work for Pay	12	25%	0%	8%	17%	0%	0%	8%
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT 40								
Parent Guidance	23	61%	22%	39%	0%	4%	35%	39%
Parent Participation	17	53%	94%	47%	0%	18%	0%	47%

In order to "unpack" this table, we will first summarize findings according to content areas, and then summarize in terms of eight grader variables.

Comparisons According to Content

As was indicated earlier the number of items within a category varied considerably across the five main categories used in this study. However, the percent of comparisons showing substantial difference only varied from 19% of those focused on the eighth grader to 34% of those dealing with characteristics of homes and families. Among specific clusters, the fact that few of these seven variables appeared to affect eighth graders' views of themselves and expectations of the future is noteworthy. It may be of more concern that so many of the comparisons which related to school success, 46%, school behavior, 38%, and use of community resources, 52%, showed substantial differences.

Characteristics

This section includes comparisons related to demographics, family risk factors as identified by the NELS study team, home resources, households, and what the youngster did after school.

Demographics. There was considerable interrelationship across the seven main variables which with religion, number of times changing schools and other items were included in the cluster of demographics. Over half of the comparisons yielded substantial differences. As can be seen in the previous table, the range in percent of comparisons yielding substantial differences across the seven variables was from 0% of those looking at sex of students, to 75% of those related to 4-H participation. Ethnicity, SES, family type, urbanicity and region all showed from 54% to 68% of the comparisons yielding substantial differences.

Households. There was considerable range in the extent to which the 24 comparisons made relating to the family varied in producing differences of 10 percentage points or more. Region and sex of students showed no substantial differences - boys and girls evidently had the same variance in family backgrounds - and ethnicity, 50%, showed the greatest percent of differences of 10 percentage points or more.

Family Risk Factors. The NELS risk factors, which we are calling family risk factors because they all deal with characteristics of the family, showed no difference for boys and girls. The most difference was related to SES, 88%, and 4-H participation, 75%.

After School. Who was home after school, the number of hours the eighth grader was home alone, and where the eighth grader went after school did not vary substantially in relation to sex of student, urbanicity, region, or 4-H participation. The highest percentage of differences of 10 percentage points or more was 44% related to family type.

Home Resources. The greatest range in variation across the seven variables appeared in relation to the 11 home resources. There were no substantial differences in relation to region and urbanicity. However, 91% of the items showed differences related to both ethnicity and socio-economic status.

The Eighth Grader

Overall, 19% of the comparisons which are related to items specific to the eighth grader showed substantial differences. The range was from 0% smoking and 11% for age and special needs, and future expectations to 26% of the communication items. Views of self are also included in this category.

Age and Special Needs. The age of the eighth grader showed substantial differences for all variables except urbanicity and region. The other items in this cluster which dealt with learning or health problems showed only one substantial difference. That difference appeared in relation to family type and the percent of eighth graders having one or more special needs.

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Future Expectations. Overall, only 11% of the comparisons yielded substantial differences. The range across the seven variables was from 0% related to urbanicity to 28% related to socio-economic status. Although most youngsters saw themselves continuing education beyond high school, those in the lowest socio-economic quartile were least sure that they would do so.

Views of Self More differences, but still a small percentage, 21%, appeared related to the eighth graders' views of self which included self-concept, locus of control, and their perception of how their school mates viewed them. The range in percent of comparisons according to variables which showed substantial differences was from 0% related to urbanicity, to 42% related to ethnicity.

Communication. About a fourth, 26%, of the 336 comparisons related to communication showed substantial differences. Ethnic heritage appeared to have more effect on communication patterns, 65% of the differences were substantial, than did socio-economic status, 38%. Region was the only characteristic not showing any difference of 10 or more percentage points.

Health Risks. The percent of eighth graders indicating that they smoked was considerably less than ten percent. It is not surprising that none of the seven variables showed a difference of ten or more percentage points in the percent smoking cigarettes.

School

Ethnicity seemed to show the most differences related to school items. Somewhat over a fourth, 28%, of all comparisons yielded substantial differences, but over half of the comparisons which related to ethnicity yielded substantial differences.

Opinions About Schools. Ethnicity showed many more substantial differences, 58%, related to opinions about schools than did the other variables. Family type was next but only showed 15% of the comparisons as substantial. Only 8% of the socio-economic status comparisons yielded substantial differences. None of the comparisons related to region showed substantial differences.

School Success. Ethnicity, 86%, showed more substantial differences than did socio-economic status, 79%, or family type, 66%. Region showed no differences of ten or more percentage points.

School Risk Indicators. Ethnicity, 100%, and Sex of Student participation, 50%, showed substantial differences in the two items included in this cluster - least and most school risk indicators. Differences related to the other five variables did not reach 10 percentage points.

Orientation to Basic Subjects. Less than one in five, 16%, of the comparisons related to orientation to school such as being bored most of the time, not seeing basic courses as relevant, or not looking forward to attending class showed substantial differences. However, 58% of the comparisons related to ethnicity yielded significant difference. In most instances eighth graders of Asian heritage showed the most positive school orientation. None of the comparisons made for family type, urbanicity and region showed substantial differences.

School Behavior. Over a third, 38%, of the comparisons made on school behavior items yielded substantial differences. The range across variables was from 6% found for urbanicity and for region to 71% appearing related to ethnicity.

Life Skill Development Activities

In general, the many activities grouped as life skill development showed relatively few differences in relation to the seven student variables examined in this study. Only 22% yielded differences of 10 or more percentage points. General participation, work for pay, and taking extra courses in school showed the fewest

differences in relation to the variables examined. 4-H participation showed the most differences related to activity participation. Socio-economic status showed several differences related to nonschool classes, and ethnicity showed some differences related to nonschool activity. It is to be noted that family type did not seem to make many differences in relation to taking part in life skill building activities.

Supplemental School Courses. None of the variables examined affected more than a third of the 10 classes included. Ethnicity and 4-H participation each showed 23% of the comparisons with ranges of 10 percentage points or more followed by socio-economic status and family type with 15%. Urbanicity and region did not show any differences of 10 or more percentage points.

Nonschool Classes. Socio-economic status showed the most differences of 10 percentage points or more, 67%, and urbanicity and region both showed no differences to that extent.

School Extracurricular Activities. The only variable which showed many differences in taking part in school extracurricular activities was that of 4-H participation, where 86% of the comparisons were of 10 percentage points or more. The other percentages ranged from 0% for urbanicity to 18% of the comparisons made of ethnicity and socio-economic status.

Nonschool Activities. Ninety-one percent of the 4-H comparisons and 73% of the ethnicity comparisons showed differences of 10 or more percentage points as compared with none of the comparisons made on sex of student.

General Participation. Only participating in 4-H, 67%, showed a difference related to general participation (total number of school and nonschool or serving as an officer). None of the other variables showed a substantial difference.

Community Resources. Using community resources showed a range from 0% for region to 100% for socio-economic status of differences of 10 or more percentage points

Reading and Viewing. Half of the socio-economic status and sex of student comparisons showed differences of 10 percentage points or more as compared with none for region and urbanicity.

Work for Pay. There was very little difference in relation to working for pay. The highest percent, 25%, appeared for ethnicity and the lowest percent, 0%, appeared for region, urbanicity, and socio-economic status.

Parental Involvement

Ethnicity appeared most related to questions grouped as indicating kind and amount of parental guidance. Socio-economic status seemed to make quite a bit of difference in the extent to which parents participated in activities related to the school.

Parent Guidance. Ethnicity showed the highest percent of comparisons of 10 or more percentage point difference, 61%. Sex of student showed no differences of 10 percentage points or more.

Parent Participation. Parents' participation, however, showed a larger range from 0% of the comparisons by sex of student and region to 94% of the comparisons by socio-economic status showing a 10 or more percentage point difference.

Comparisons According to Variables

It was indicated earlier that overall, ethnicity showed the greatest number of substantial differences and urbanicity and region showed the least such differences. The summary that follows goes one step deeper and indicates the range in the variable's relationship to the various content areas.

Ethnicity. Ethnicity seemed to make the most difference in relation to the school indicators examined. From half to all of the comparisons showed differences of 10 percentage points or more. The percent of comparisons showing 10 or more percentage point difference in the five areas related to school performance were school risk indicators, 100%; school success, 86%; school behavior, 71%; opinions about school, 58%; and orientation to basic subjects, 58%. However, under the life skill development activity area, taking supplementary school classes such as shop, home economics, or computers did not show many differences (23%). By contrast, only one of the clusters under the eighth grader showed 50% or more difference related to ethnicity. Only 21% of the differences related to future expectations showed a difference of at least 10 percent across ethnic groups. Other areas where ethnicity seemed to make considerable difference as identified by the percent of comparisons were as follows: home resources, 91%; communication, 65%; nonschool activities, 73%; use of community resources, 71%; and parent guidance, 61%. Two areas, smoking and general participation did not show any comparisons with differences of 10 or more percentage points.

Socio-economic status. The school category showed many fewer differences related to socio-economic status than appeared for ethnicity. Differences related to school success items did show 79% with substantial differences, but the other clusters, even behavior, showed fewer differences of 10 or more percentage points. Youngsters showed very little difference in their orientation to basic subjects and their opinions about school when socio-economic status categories were examined.

Three of the areas where socio-economic status showed the highest percent of substantial differences were ones which related to one or more of the components of the socio-economic status index. They were using community resources, 100%; parents participating in school activities, 94%, home resources, 91%; family risk factors which included incomes below $15,000 as a definition of risk, 88%; school success, 79%; and taking nonschool classes, 67%. Four areas, school risk indicators, smoking, general participation, and work for pay did not show any differences of 10 percentage points or more. The connection between socio-economic status and the areas of substantial difference may be traceable to specific components of economic status. For example, home resources, family risk factors, and taking nonschool classes are likely to be affected by family income. Parent participation, use of community resources, and eighth graders taking nonschool classes are likely to be affected by the parent's educational level, and, perhaps to some extent, by family income.

Family type. Family type showed several substantial differences but fewer than either ethnicity or socio-economic status. Half or more of the following comparisons showed substantial differences: home resources, 82%; school behavior, 59%; school success, 66%; family risk factors, 63%; community resources, 57%; and demographics, 54%. The areas which did not show at least one comparison of 10 or more percentage points were smoking, school risk indicators, orientation to basic subjects, and general participation. Perhaps the most relevant finding is that family type seemed to make little difference in terms of youngsters' attitudes toward school. This confronts any beliefs about children from single-parent homes being less well-adjusted in school than others. It is also to be noted that with the exception of using community resources, family type did not seem to make much difference in relation to taking part in life skill development activities.

Sex of student. Although equality in school success, participation in school extracurricular, and nonschool activities are very similar for both boys and girls, there still seems to be a major difference in school behavior. Boys are more likely to get into trouble than are girls. Only school risk indicators, 50%; school behavior, 47%; and reading and viewing, 50%, showed a high percentage of comparisons at this level. Nine areas didn't yield any differences as great as 10 percentage points. They were as follows: demographics, households, family risk factors, after school, smoking, nonschool activities, general participation, parent guidance and participation.

Urbanicity. The greatest percent of substantial differences, 57%, was found related to demographics. However, the differences in the demographic make-up of eighth graders living in the three areas of population density was not reflected in differences in most other areas. Using community resources showed the greatest percent of comparisons yielding differences of 10 or more percentage points, but only 43% of those comparisons showed this kind of difference. Fourteen areas did not show any differences at this level. Those areas were after school, age and special needs, future expectations, views of self, smoking, opinions about school, school risk indicators, orientation to basic subjects, school courses, nonschool classes, school extracurricular activities, general participation, reading and viewing, and work for pay.

Region. Demographics showed the greatest percent of substantial differences related to region, 60%, but again the demographic differences were not strong enough to show in other areas. Parent guidance had the highest percent of comparisons yielding differences of 10 or more percentage points. Even in that category, only 36% of the differences reached that level. Sixteen areas showed no comparisons with a difference of 10 percentage points or more. Those areas were households, after school, home resources, age and special needs, communication, smoking, school success, school risk indicators, orientation to basic subjects, school courses, nonschool classes, general participation, community resources, reading and viewing, work for pay, and parent participation. Region played little role.

Participation in 4-H. Participation in 4-H ranked third in the number of substantial differences but is placed here because it is not a standard demographic variable. It is included in this study because the initiators and researchers have a specific interest in Extension youth programs. Most differences seemed to be between those who joined 4-H in the eighth grade (parents did not say they had belonged) and others rather than between those who did or did not take part in 4-H. Substantial differences appeared related to participation in other nonschool, 91%, and school extracurricular activities, 86%, and to general participation, 67%. There were also marked differences related to demographics, 75%; family risk factors, 75%; and school success, 62%. After school, smoking, and school risk indicators were the only areas which did not show any comparisons with differences of 10 or more percentage points.

Summary Tables

The seven pages that follow show the percent of substantial differences for each variable rank ordered within content category. The information should be the same as in the large table included previously, but it may be easier to follow for a reader interested in only one variable.

Ethnicity

Over half of the 439 comparisons made in relation to ethnicity showed differences of 10 percentage points or more. The ethnic background of the youngster appeared to have the most effect (70% or more of the comparisons reached a range of at least 10 percentage points) in relation to school risk, home resources, demographic characteristics, school success, school behavior and use of community resources. Ethnicity seemed to have the least affect (20% or fewer of the comparisons with a range of at least 10 percentage points) related to smoking, general participation, age and special needs, and school extracurricular activities.

Percent of Comparisons Showing 10 or More Percentage Point Difference
When Ethnic Heritages Were Compared

	Number Possible	Percent 10 or More Points
CHARACTERISTICS 87		
Home Resources	11	91%
Demographics	28	68%
Family Risk Factors (NELS)	8	63%
Households	24	50%
After School	16	31%
EIGHTH GRADERS 132		
Communication	48	65%
Views of Self	36	42%
Future Expectations	39	21%
Age and Special Needs	8	13%
Health Risk--Smoking	1	0%
SCHOOL 93		
School Risk Indicators	2	100%
School Success	29	86%
School Behavior	17	71%
Opinions About School	26	58%
Orientation To Subjects	19	58%
LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 87		
Nonschool Activities	11	73%
Community Resources	7	71%
Nonschool Classes	9	44%
School Courses	13	23%
Reading and Viewing	4	25%
Work for Pay	12	25%
School Extracurricular	28	18%
General Participation	3	0%
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT 40		
Parent Guidance	23	61%
Parent Participation	17	53%
	Total 439	

Five Items Showing Greatest Percentage Point Difference (PPD)

		PPD
o	Leavers: Native American, 1% to 86% White	85
o	Stayers: Native American, Asian, 1% to 85% White	84
o	Highest Quartile SES: Native American, 1% to 85% White	84
o	North Central: Native American, 1% to 85% White	84
o	Father and Stepmother: Native American, 1% to 79% White	78

Thirty-eight percent of the 439 comparisons showed differences in ranges of 10 percentage points or more. Socio-economic status (SES) appeared to make the most difference in relation to use of community resources, parent participation, home facilities, family risk factors and school success. None of the comparisons related to working for pay and overall participation showed differences of 10 percentage points or more.

Percent of Comparisons Showing 10 or More Percentage Point Difference
When SES Quartiles Were Compared

	Number Possible	Percent 10 or More Points
CHARACTERISTICS 87		
Home Resources	28	91%
Family Risk Factors (NELS)	8	88%
Demographics	28	54%
Households	24	33%
After School	16	19%
EIGHTH GRADERS 132		
Communication	48	38%
Views of Self	36	36%
Future Expectations	39	28%
Age and Special Needs	8	13%
Health Risk--Smoking	1	0%
SCHOOL 93		
School Success	29	79%
School Behavior	19	35%
Orientation To Subjects	19	11%
Opinions About School	26	8%
School Risk Indicators	2	0%
LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 87		
Community Resources	7	100%
Nonschool Classes	9	67%
Reading and Viewing	4	50%
Nonschool Activities	11	36%
School Extracurricular	28	18%
School Courses	13	15%
General Participation	3	0%
Work for Pay	12	0%
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT 40		
Parent Participation	15	94%
Parent Guidance	23	22%
	Total 439	

Five Items Showing Greatest Percentage Point Difference (PPD)

		PPD
o	Parents completed college degree: lowest, 3% to 83% highest SES quartile	80
o	Family income under $15,000: lowest, 62% to 1% highest SES quartile	61
o	No NELS risk factors: lowest, 18% to 78% highest SES quartile	60
o	Family income $50,000 or over: lowest, 1% to 58% highest SES quartile	57
o	Three or more NELS risk factors: lowest, 3% to 53% highest SES quartile	50

Family Type

Somewhat more than a third, 36%, of the comparisons made in relation to family type showed differences of 10 percentage points or more. Only one area, home resources, showed 70% or more of the comparisons with a range of 10 or more percentage points. Other areas where half or more of the comparisons showed differences in the range of 10 percentage points were demographics, family risk factors, school success, school behavior, use of community resources. The fewest differences (less than 10 percent of the comparisons) appeared related to smoking, school risk, orientation to basic subjects, general participation, extracurricular activities, nonschool activities, and work for pay.

Percent of Comparisons Showing 10 Or More Percentage Point Difference When Family Types Were Compared

	Number Possible	Percent 10 or More Points
CHARACTERISTICS 87		
Home Resources	11	82%
Family Risk Factors (NELS)	8	63%
Demographics	28	54%
After School	16	44%
Households	24	17%
EIGHTH GRADERS 132		
Communication	48	35%
Age and Special Needs	8	25%
Views of Self	36	22%
Future Expectations	39	10%
Health Risk--Smoking	1	0%
SCHOOL 93		
School Success	29	66%
School Behavior	17	59%
Opinions About School	26	15%
School Risk Indicators	2	0%
Orientation To Subjects	19	0%
LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 87		
Community Resources	7	57%
Nonschool Classes	9	33%
Reading and Viewing	4	25%
School Courses	13	15%
Nonschool Activities	11	9%
Work for Pay	12	8%
School Extracurricular	28	4%
General Participation	3	0%
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT 40		
Parent Participation	17	47%
Parent Guidance	23	39%
	Total 439	

Six Items Showing Greatest Percentage Point Difference (PPD)

	PPD
o Highest SES quartile: mother/stepfather, father, neither, 2% to 78% both parents	76
o Asian: neither parent, 4% to 78% both parents	74
o Stayers: single father, father/stepmother, 2% to 71% both parents	69
o White: neither parent, 2% to 68% both parents	66
o Northeast: father/stepmother, single father, 2% to 68% both parents	66
o Leavers: single father, 2% to 68% both parents	66

Only 9% of the 439 comparisons showed differences of 10 percentage points or more when responses of and/or about boys and girls were compared. The only area where as many as half of the comparisons yielded such differences was reading and viewing and school risk indicators. Ten areas had zero or fewer than 5% of the comparisons showing 10 percentage points difference including demographics, households, family risk factors, time after school, smoking, orientation toward and opinions about school, nonschool activities and general participation, and parent guidance and participation.

Percent of Comparisons Showing 10 or More Percentage Point Difference
When Students Were Compared by Sex

	Number Possible	Percent 10 or More Points
CHARACTERISTICS 87		
Home Resources	11	18%
Demographics	28	0%
Households	24	0%
Family Risk Factors (NELS)	8	0%
After School	16	0%
EIGHTH GRADERS 132		
Views of Self	36	19%
Age and Special Needs	8	13%
Communication	48	10%
Future Expectations	39	5%
Health Risk--Smoking	1	0%
SCHOOL 93		
School Risk Indicators	2	50%
School Behavior	17	47%
School Success	29	17%
Orientation To Subjects	19	5%
Opinions About School	26	4%
LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 87		
Reading and Viewing	4	50%
Nonschool Classes	9	22%
Work for Pay	12	17%
Community Resources	7	14%
School Extracurricular	28	11%
School Courses	13	8%
Nonschool Activities	11	0%
General Participation	3	0%
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT 40		
Parent Guidance	23	0%
Parent Participation	17	0%
	Total 439	

Five Items Showing Greatest Percentage Point Difference (PPD)

		PPD
o	Babysitting/child care for pay: boys 6%; 58% girls	52
o	Take dance lessons: boys 3%; 29% girls	26
o	Do lawnwork for pay: girls 2%; 27% boys	25
o	Sent to office for misbehaving: girls 20%; 44% boys	24
o	Was in a physical fight: girls 11%; 34% boys	23

Urbanicity

Whether the youngster lived in a central city, suburban area, or rural area did not appear to affect responses to most of these questions. Only 8% of the comparisons showed differences or 10 percentage points or more. Other than demographics, only two areas showed as many as 25% of the comparisons with a difference in the range between groups of 10 percentage points or more.

Percent of Comparisons Showing 10 or More Percentage Point Difference
When Students Were Compared by Place of Residence

	Number Possible	Percent 10 or More Points
CHARACTERISTICS 87		
Demographics	28	57%
Family Risk Factors (NELS)	8	25%
Home Resources	11	9%
Households	24	8%
After School	16	0%
EIGHTH GRADERS 132		
Communication	48	2%
Age and Special Needs	8	0%
Future Expectations	39	0%
Views of Self	36	0%
Health Risk--Smoking	1	0%
SCHOOL 93		
School Success	29	10%
School Behavior	17	6%
Opinions About School	26	0%
School Risk Indicators	2	0%
Orientation To Subjects	19	0%
LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 87		
Community Resources	7	43%
Nonschool Activities	11	18%
Reading and Viewing	4	0%
School Courses	13	0%
Nonschool Classes	9	0%
School Extracurricular	28	0%
General Participation	3	0%
Work for Pay	12	0%
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT 40		
Parent Participation	17	18%
Parent Guidance	23	4%
	Total 439	

Six Items Showing Greatest Percentage Point Difference (PPD)

	PPD
o Stayers: urban, 7% to 61% rural	54
o Asian: rural, 10% to 49% suburban	39
o Northeast: rural, 19% to 54% suburban	35
o West: rural, 20% to 53% suburban	33
o Black: rural, 20% to 52% suburban	32
o Highest Quartile: rural, 22% to 54% suburban	32

Region

Region appeared to make very little difference in the responses. Only 7% of the 439 comparisons yielded differences of 10 percentage points or more. Only demographics showed many comparisons yielding those differences. Sixteen areas, including school success and risk, school courses and nonschool classes, community resources, and parent participation showed no comparisons that were this great.

Percent of Comparisons Showing 10 or More Percentage Point Difference When Students Were Compared by Region

	Number Possible	Percent 10 or More Points
CHARACTERISTICS 87		
Demographics	28	60%
Family Risk Factors (NELS)	8	15%
Households	24	0%
After School	16	0%
Home Resources	11	0%
EIGHTH GRADERS 132		
Future Expectations	39	5%
Views of Self	36	3%
Age and Special Needs	8	0%
Communication	48	0%
Health Risk--Smoking	1	0%
SCHOOL 93		
School Behavior	17	6%
Opinions About School	26	4%
School Success	29	0%
School Risk Indicators	2	0%
Orientation To Subjects	19	0%
LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 87		
Nonschool Activities	11	13%
School Extracurricular	28	4%
School Courses	13	0%
Nonschool Classes	9	0%
General Participation	3	0%
Community Resources	7	0%
Reading and Viewing	4	0%
Work for Pay	12	0%
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT 40		
Parent Guidance	23	36%
Parent Participation	17	0%
	Total 439	

Five Items Showing Greatest Percentage Point Difference (PPD)

	PPD
o Black: West, 8% to 60% South	52
o Baptist: Northeast, 10% to 49% South	39
o Asian: North Central, 14% to 47% West	33
o Hispanic: North Central, 10% to 43% West	33
o Native American: Northeast, 15% to 45% West	30

Over a third, 36%, of the 439 comparisons yielded differences of 10 percentage points or more. Four areas, demographics, family risk factors, school extracurricular and nonschool activities showed 70% or more of the comparisons yielding differences across the range of 10 percentage points. All other areas except after school, future expectations, smoking, school risk indicators, and work for pay showed a moderate amount of differences. In most instances, rather than indicating a difference between 4-H members and those who had never been in 4-H, the difference seemed to be between the joiners, those who said they were in 4-H in 1988 but whose parents said they were not, and other three groups.

Percent of Comparisons Showing 10 or More Percentage Point Difference
When Students Were Compared According to 4-H Participation

	Number Possible	Percent 10 or More Points
CHARACTERISTICS 87		
Demographics	28	75%
Family Risk Factors (NELS)	8	75%
Home Resources	11	36%
Households	24	17%
After School	16	0%
EIGHTH GRADERS 132		
Communication	48	33%
Views of Self	36	28%
Age and Special Needs	8	13%
Future Expectations	39	5%
Health Risk--Smoking	1	0%
SCHOOL 93		
School Success	29	62%
School Behavior	17	47%
Orientation To Subjects	19	37%
Opinions About School	26	19%
School Risk Indicators	2	0%
LIFE SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES 87		
Nonschool Activities	11	91%
School Extracurricular	28	86%
General Participation	3	67%
Community Resources	7	43%
Nonschool Classes	9	33%
Reading and Viewing	4	25%
School Courses	13	23%
Work for Pay	12	8%
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT 40		
Parent Participation	17	47%
Parent Guidance	23	39%
	Total 439	

Five Items Showing Greatest Percentage Point Difference (PPD)

		PPD
o	Hispanic: leavers and stayers, 1% to 93% nevers	92
o	Asian: stayers, 2% to 92% nevers	90
o	Urban: stayers, 2% to 91% nevers	89
o	Northeast: joiners, 2% to 91% nevers	89
o	West: stayers, 2% to 89% nevers	87

APPENDIX A
RELATIONSHIP OF THE MAIN VARIABLES

Some readers may be especially interested in how the seven main variables relate to each other. Others may have questions after reading one of the findings and finding that two variables both showed several substantial differences. One then might wonder if there is an interaction between those two variables.

Region and Urbanicity – Rural and urban populations are not equally distributed across the United States.

There were differences from 10 to 35 percentage points or more in the rural-urban make up of three of the four regions. The highest percentage in three regions were from suburban areas. In the Northeast and West over half of the population lived in suburban areas, in the North Central region less than two-fifths were classified as suburban. The lowest percentage of the population in the Northeast and West was from rural areas while in the North Central the lowest percentage was from the urban area. The Southern region was more equally balanced in that 30% were from suburban schools: 34% rural schools; and 37% urban schools.

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) of Urban, Suburban, and Rural Make-Up of Regions

	PPD
Northeast: rural, 19% to 54% suburban	35
West: rural, 20% to 53% suburban	33
North Central: urban, 29% to 39% suburban	10

Looking at the relationship in a different way, as to how the three kinds of population were distributed across the region, less than a third of the suburban area was in the South and over half was in the Northeast. The highest percent of both the urban and rural population was in the South.

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) in Distribution of Urban, Suburban, and Rural Population Across Regions

	PPD
Urban: Northeast and West, 18% to 37% South	19
Suburban: South, 30% to 54% Northeast	24
Rural: Northeast, 14% to 42% South	28

The decided difference in the percentage of eighth graders living in various regions and population density situations, is almost irrelevant for this study. As will be seen later, it did not seem to make much difference to the activities, performance and expectations which were the main focus of this analysis. Only 7% of the comparisons made of responses according to region and 8% according to urbanicity showed differences of 10 percentage points or more.

Ethnicity and Region – Each ethnic group was found in each region.

Almost half of the eighth graders of Asian heritage were found in the West. The other half was divided among the other three regions with North Central having the fewest, 14% of the Asian students. The larger share of the Hispanics, 43%, lived in the Western region. The smallest percent, 10%, lived in the North Central region. Sixty percent of the Black students lived in the South. The Western region only had 8 percent of the Black students. All of the regions had at least 10% of the eighth graders of Native American heritage with the Northeast having the smallest percent, 16%, and the West having the largest percent, 45%. The distribution of White eighth graders across the United States followed general population distribution with the smallest percentage in the West and the largest percentage in the South.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) in Ethnic Distribution Across Regions

	PPD
Asians: North Central, 14% to 47% West	33
Hispanic: North Central, 10% to 43% West	33
Black: West, 8% to 60% South	52
White. West, 16% to 32% South	16
Native American: Northeast, 16% to 45% West	29

Looked at another way, in all regions the smallest percentage of the eighth grade population was Native American and the largest percentage was White. The percentage of the population that was White in each region ranged from 60% in the West to 85% in the Northeast.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) in Ethnic Make Up Of Regions

	PPD
North Central: Native American, 1% to 85% White	84
Northeast: Native American, 1% to 77% White	76
South: Native American, 1% to 65% White	64
West: Native American, 3% to 60% White	57

Ethnicity and Urbanicity – Each ethnic group was found in each urbanicity category.

The smallest percentage of Asians, Hispanics, and Blacks were found in rural areas. However, at least 10% of each of the three ethnic heritages did live in rural areas. The smallest percentage of White and Native Americans lived in urban areas. The largest percent of Asians and Whites lived in suburban areas. The largest percent of Hispanics and Blacks lived in urban areas, and the largest percent of Native Americans lived in rural areas.

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) in Ethnic Groups by Residence

	PPD
Asians: rural, 13% to 54% suburban	41
Hispanic: rural, 20% to 41% urban	21
Black: rural, 22% to 50% urban	28
White: urban, 18% to 47% suburban	29
Native American: urban, 30% to 38% rural	8

When the population of each of the three urbanicity categories was examined, the largest percent in all three areas was White. However, only slightly more than three-fourths of the urban population was White as compared with about four-fifths of the suburban and rural populations. The smallest percentage of the urban and suburban population was Native American. The smallest percent of the rural population was Asian.

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) Ethnic Make Up of
Urban, Suburban, and Rural Eighth Graders

	PPD
Urban: Native Americans, 2% to 50% White	48
Suburban: Native Americans, 1% to 77% White	76
Rural: Asian, 1% to 81% White	80

Ethnicity appeared to make the most difference in responses to other questions. Slightly over half of the comparisons of responses according to ethnicity showed differences of more than 10 percentage points.

It would appear that some of the differences in how eighth graders and their parents responded to other questions may be due to cultural differences related to various ethnic backgrounds. However, it is also very likely that some of the differences are caused by a "majority /minority" mind set in which the two groups are not completely comfortable with each other.

Socio-economic Status and Ethnicity – **Some percentage of each ethnic group fell into each socio-economic quartile.**

Although almost half of the eighth graders in the lowest socio-economic quartile were Hispanics, there were also Asian, Black, and Whites in this quartile. Native Americans made up the smallest percentage in each quartile. Whites made up the vast majority in all quartiles except the lowest.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) in Ethnic Make Up of Socio-economic Quartiles

	PPD
Lowest SES quartile: Native Americans, 2% to 49% Hispanics	47
Next to lowest: Native Americans, 1% to 72% White	71
Next to highest: Native Americans, 1% to 78% White	77
Highest SES quartile: Native Americans, 1% to 85% White	84

Another way of looking at the data is that of looking at each ethnic group and seeing how it was distributed across the four quartiles. About twice as many Asian eighth graders were in the highest socio-economic quartile as were in the lowest quartile. On the other hand, about five times as many Hispanic, four times as many Black, and three times as many Native American youngsters were from families in the lowest quartile as were in the highest quartile. More Whites were in the highest quartile than were in the lowest quartile.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) in Ethnic Distribution Across Socio-economic Quartiles

	PPD
Asian: lowest, 19% to 36% highest SES quartile	17
Hispanic: lowest, 49% to 10% highest SES quartile	39
Black: lowest, 42% to 10% highest SES quartile	32
White: lowest, 18% to 29% highest SES quartile	11
Native American: lowest, 38% to 11% highest SES quartile	27

Socio-economic Status and Region – **There were differences in the mix of socio-economic status quartiles in the four regions.**

If socio-economic status were equally distributed within a region, the region would show 25% in each of the four quartiles. The table below shows the extent to which the proportioning is skewed in each region. The skewing is greatest in the Northeast which has fewer in the lowest socio-economic status quartile and more in the highest quartile. The South shows the least percent in the highest quartile and the greatest percent in the lowest quartile. In the North Central and Western regions, although the smallest percent is in the lowest quartile, the highest percent is in one of the middle quartiles.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) in Socio-economic Quartiles by Regions

	PPD
Northeast: lowest, 20% to 31% highest	11
North Central: lowest, 23% to 29% next to lowest	6
South: highest, 22% to 30% lowest	8
West: lowest, and next to lowest, 23% to 28% next to highest	5

Looking at it from the perspective of the socio-economic status quartiles, we found the highest percentage of the lowest SES quartile families with eighth graders was in the South and the smallest percentage in the Northeast. In fact, the Northeast showed a disproportionately small percentage and the South showed a disproportionately high percentage in each of the lowest three quartiles. The distribution of the highest percentile was reversed with the Northeast showing a disproportionate low and the South showing a disproportionate high. (Remember, that this information is not for the population as a whole, but for households which have an eighth grader, generally those with the adults of the family in their forties.)

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) in the Distribution of Socio-economic Status Quartiles Across the United States

	PPD
Lowest SES quartile: Northeast, 20% to 30% South	10
Next to lowest: Northeast and West, 18% to 34% South	16
Next to highest: Northeast, 19% to 33% South	14
Highest SES quartile: South, 22% to 31% Northeast	9

Socio-economic Status and Urbanicity – **Urban areas were closest to balanced in the percentage of the four socio-economic quartiles presented among eighth graders families.**

There was only four percentage point difference between the percent of urban families in the quartiles at the bottom and top of the range. On the other hand, there was a 15 percentage point difference in the make-up of the rural families, with the highest quartile showing up as disproportionately low.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) in Socio-economic Quartiles by Urbanicity

	PPD
Urban: highest and next to highest, 24% to 28% lowest quartile	4
Suburban: lowest, 18% to 31% highest	13
Rural: highest, 17% to 32% lowest	15

In all quartiles except the lowest, the highest percent was found in the suburban areas. Over half of the eighth graders' families who were classified in the highest socio-economic quartile lived in suburban areas. The highest percentage of lower socio-economic families were found in rural areas.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) in Socio-economic Quartile by Location

	PPD
Lowest SES quartile: urban, 28% to 40% rural	12
Next to lowest: urban, 23% to 41% suburban	18
Next to highest: urban 24% to 47% suburban	23
Highest SES quartile: rural, 22% to 54% suburban	32

Family Type and Ethnicity – **Whites made up from over half to over three-fourths of each family type. Black eighth graders were least likely and Asian eighth graders were most likely to be living with both of their natural or adoptive parents.**

Whites predominated in each family type. The percentage of Whites varied from 56% of the single families headed by the mother to 78% of the families made up of a father and stepmother.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) in Ethnic Make Up of Family Types

	PPD
Both parents: Native American, 1% to 76% White	75
Mother/stepfather: Native American, 1% to 72% White	71
Father/stepmother: Native American, 1% to 79% White	78
Mother: Native American, Asian, 2% to 56% White	54
Father: Native American, 1% to 75% White	74
Neither parent: Native American, 3% to 48% White	45

The percent of eighth graders living with someone other than a parent did not vary extensively and was always the smallest percentage for each ethnic group. The percent living with both parents was always the highest for each ethnic group, but the percentage of eighth graders living with both parents ranged from 38% of Black eighth graders to 78% of Asian eighth graders.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) in Ethnic Distribution Across Family Types

	PPD
Asian: neither parent, 4% to 78% both parents	74
Hispanic: neither parent, 3% to 63% both parents	60
Black: neither parent, 8% to 38% both parents	30
White: neither parent, 2% to 68% both parents	66
Native American: neither parent, 6% to 56% both parents	50

Family Type and Socio-economic Status – **Families with both original parents were more likely to be in the upper socio-economic quartile than any other family type. Families without either original parent were most likely to be in the lowest quartile. However, there was considerable variation in each family type.**

There was considerable difference in the mix of socio-economic status among the family types. For example, even though more families where the eighth grader was living with both original parents were in the highest socio-economic quartile than other family types, still a fifth were in the lowest quartile. Although almost half of the eighth graders who were living with someone other than either original parent were in the lowest socio-economic quartile, one in ten was in the highest quartile. Even though almost two-fifths of the single parent families headed by the mother were in the lowest SES quartile, one in ten was in the highest quartile.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) in Socio-economic Status of Family Types

	PPD
Both parents: highest quartile, 31% to 20% lowest quartile	11
Mother/stepfather: highest quartile, 17% to 28% lowest two quartiles	11
Father/stepmother: highest quartile, 21% to 29% next to lowest quartile	8
Mother: highest, 13% quartile to 39% lowest quartile	26
Father: highest quartile, 22% to 27% next to lowest quartile	5
Neither parent: highest quartile, 14% to 45% lowest quartile	31

Families made up of both original parents were the predominant group in each socio-economic quartile ranging from 50% of the lowest SES quartile to 78% of highest SES quartile families.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of Family Types Across Socio-economic Quartiles

	PPD
Lowest SES quartile: father/stepmother, 2% to 50% both parents	48
Next to lowest: neither, father/stepmother, father, 3% to 61% both parents	58
Next to highest: father/stepmother and neither, 2% to 65% both parents	63
Highest SES quartile: mother/stepfather, father, neither, 2% to 78% both parents	76

Family Type and Urbanicity – About the same percentage of single parent families headed by the mother, and families with neither original parent appeared in all three areas. For all family types, the highest percentage was found in the suburbs and the lowest in the urban areas.

Single parent families headed by mothers are so often pictured as living in central cities. It is somewhat of a surprise to find that for eighth graders' parents, such families are about equally dispersed with the highest percentage found in suburban areas. Fewer of each family type lived in urban than in rural areas. The highest percentage of each family type lived in suburban areas.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) of Family Types According to Place of Residence

	PPD
Both parents: urban, 22% to 45% suburban	23
Mother and stepfather: urban, 25% to 44% suburban	19
Father and stepmother: urban, 21% to 45% suburban	24
Mother: urban 35%, to suburban 37%	2
Father: urban, 25% to suburban 48%	23
Neither parent: urban, 32% to 34% rural and suburban	2

The percentage of eighth graders families made up of both original parents ranged from 57% of urban families to 66% of suburban families.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) Place of Residence and Family Types

	PPD
Urban: father/stepmother, 2% to 57% both parents	55
Suburban: father/stepmother, father, mother, 3% to 66% both parents	63
Rural: mother only, 2% to 65% both parents	62

Family Type and Region – Family types were fairly consistent across regions. However, the South had the lowest percent of families having both original parents.

The distribution of family types across regions followed the population distribution with the smallest percent appearing in the Northeast and the largest percentage appearing in the South except in the case of both parents, where the Western region was the lowest.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) in Family Types Across Regions

	PPD
Both parents: West, 19% to 33% South	14
Mother/stepfather: Northeast, 16% to 40% South	24
Father/stepmother: Northeast, 15% to 38% South	23
Mother: Northeast, 18% to 38% South	20
Father: Northeast, 16% to 37% South	21
Neither parent: Northeast, 15% to 46% South	31

Eighth graders' families made up of both original parents constituted the highest percentage in all regions. The range was from 59% of the Southern to 68% of Northeastern families.

Percentage Point Differences (PPD) in Make Up of Regions by Family Types

	PPD
Northeast: father/stepmother, single father, 2% to 68% both parents	66
North Central: father/stepmother, single father, neither, 2% to 67% both parents	66
South: father/stepmother, single father, 3% to 59% both parents	66
West: father/stepmother, 3% to 62% both parents	59

Sex of Students -- There were very few substantial differences between eighth grade boys and girls when other variables were examined.

Sex was the only one of the seven variables used in this study that didn't show substantial differences when run against the other six variables. After rounding, percentages in each of the ethnic group showed a 50-50 distribution except Asians where there were 53% boys to 47% girls. The difference in relation to family type was 63% of the girls lived with both parents as compared with 65% of the boys. The lowest socio-economic status quartile was made up of 49% boys and 51% girls; the highest quartile, 52% boys and 48% girls. The three urbanicity categories split at 50% of each. Regions also showed a 50-50 division. Less than 10 percent of the comparisons made of responses by sex of the respondent yielded differences of 10 percentage points or more.

4-H Participation

The previous six demographic characteristics were the main focus of this study. However, other characteristics were also included in this demographic cluster.

4-H – About one eighth grader in 20 had taken part in 4-H at some time in their life.

About one in ten eighth graders said they were taking part in 4-H at the time of the survey. About 6% had started in 4-H before the eighth grade and continued. This group is called the "stayers" in this report. Another 4% apparently took part in 4-H for the first time in the eighth grade. This group is called the "joiners." The "joiners" are youngsters who said they were in 4-H, but whose parents did not say they had ever been in 4-H. Eight percent had taken part in 4-H sometime in the past and then dropped out of 4-H. This group is called the "leavers" in this study. In total, 19% of all eighth grade girls and 15% of all eighth grade boys had taken part in 4-H at some time in their lives. The group that had never taken part in 4-H was called the "nevers".

4-H and Ethnicity – **A higher percentage of Black youngsters took part in 4-H than did students from other ethnic groups.**

4-H attracted youth from diverse ethnic backgrounds. For all of the ethnic groups except White, the stayers, those who were in 4-H in the eighth grade, made up the smallest percent and those who had never taken part in 4-H made up the largest percent. However, the percent who had never been in 4-H varied from 92% of Asian and Hispanic eighth graders to 79% of Black eighth graders. One in five Black youths, (21%) had at some time taken part in 4-H as compared with 18% of the White youths.

Percent Who Had Taken Part in 4-H According to Ethnic Background

	PPD
Asian: stayers, 2% to 92% nevers	90
Hispanic: stayers, leavers, 2% to 92% nevers	90
Black: stayers, 6% to 80% nevers	74
White: joiners, 2% to 82% nevers	80
Native American: stayers, 5% to 82% nevers	77

The majority in each of the four 4-H categories were Whites.

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) of Ethnic Make up of 4-H Participants

	PPD
Nevers: Native American, 1%, to 75% White	74
Leavers: Native American, 1%, to 86% White	85
Stayers: Native American, Asian, 1%, to 85% White	84
Joiners: Native American, 2%, to 57% White	55

4-H and Socio-economic Status – **4-H drew participation fairly evenly from all except the highest SES quartile.**

Slightly more eighth graders who had never been in 4-H were in the highest SES quartile than were those who had at some time been in 4-H. The new joiners were most likely to be from the lowest SES quartile and least likely to be from the highest quartile.

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) of Socio-economic Status of 4-H Participants

	PPD
Nevers: lowest, 22% to 27% highest SES quartile	5
Leavers: lowest, 21% to 29% next to highest SES quartile	8
Stayers: highest, 21% to 28% next to lowest SES quartile	7
Joiners: highest, 16% to 36% lowest SES quartile	10

Over four-fifths of each SES quartile had not taken part in 4-H. The percentage was slightly higher in the highest SES quartile.

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) in Who Had Taken Part in 4-H According to Socio-economic Status

	PPD
Lowest SES quartile: joiners, 5% to 82% nevers	77
Moderately low: joiners, 3% to 82% nevers	79
Moderately high: joiners, 3%, to 82% nevers	79
High SES quartile: joiners, 2%, to 87% nevers	85

4-H and Family Type – There was moderate difference in 4-H participation according to family type.

Joiners were least likely and stayers were most likely to be living with both parents. Those only living with their father were the least likely to be taking part in 4-H. However, they were also the smallest percent of all eighth graders.

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) in Family Type of 4-H Participants

	PPD
Nevers: single parent father, 2% to 65% both parents	63
Leavers: single parent father, 2% to 68% both parents	66
Stayers: single parent father, father/stepmother, 2% to 71% both parents	69
Joiners: single parent father, 3% to 54% both parents	51

Among those living with only one parent, the percent who had never taken part in 4-H was very similar to the percent of those living with both parents.

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) in Who Had Taken Part in 4-H According to Family Type

	PPD
Both parents: joiners, 3% to 83% nevers	80
Mother and stepfather: joiners, 4% to 84% nevers	80
Father and stepmother: joiners, 5% to 82% nevers	77
Mother only: stayers, 4% to 85% nevers	81
Father only: joiners, 4% to 84% nevers	80
Neither parent: joiners, 5% to 82% never	77

4-H and Sex of Student– More girls than boys had joined 4-H previous to the eighth grade and had remained in 4-H in the eighth grade.

The leavers and stayers groups were made up of about the same proportions of boys and girls. The joiner group was more equal in percentage.

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) in Sex of 4-H Members

	PPD
Nevers: boys, 50%; 50% girls	0
Leavers: boys, 40%; 60% girls	20
Stayers: boys, 39%; 61% girls	22
Joiners: boys, 53%; 47% girls	6

A few more boys than girls had never been in 4-H. (There were a few more boys than girls in the total sample.)

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) in 4-H Participation According to Sex

	PPD
Boys: joiners, 4% to 85% nevers	81
Girls: joiners, 3% to 81% nevers	78

4-H and Urbanicity – Although there were some urban eighth graders among the leavers and stayers, the largest percentage were rural. The largest percent of those who had never belonged to 4-H was suburban.

The percentages of rural youngsters ranged from 37% of the new joiners to 61% of the stayers. However, it must also be noted that the range in the percentages of urban youngsters in 4-H ranged from 7% of the stayers to 27% of the joiners.

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) in Place of Residence of 4-H Members

	PPD
Nevers: urban, 26% to 46% suburban	20
Leavers: urban, 12% to 54% rural	42
Stayers: urban, 7% to 61% rural	54
Joiner: urban, 27% to 37% rural	10

A majority of all three urbanicity groups had not been in 4-H. A small percent in each of the three categories were classified as joiners.

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) in 4-H Participation According to Urbanicity

	PPD
Urban: stayers, 2% to 91% nevers	89
Suburban: joiners, 3% to 87% nevers	84
Rural: joiners, 4% to 73% nevers	69

4-H and Region– 4-H membership followed eighth grade population. The largest percent of eighth graders was in the South and the largest percent in all of the 4-H categories was in the South.

The Northeast provided the smallest and the South provided the largest percent of 4-H members in all three categories. The eighth graders who had never been in 4-H were more evenly distributed across the regions. Four times as many stayers and five times as many leavers were from the South as from the Northeast.

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) in Region of 4-H Members

	PPD
Nevers: West, 20% to 31% South	11
Leavers: Northeast, 10% to 50% South	40
Stayers: Northeast, 10% to 43% South	33
Joiner: Northeast, 13% to 49% South	36

In each case, the smallest percent in the region were joiners and the largest percent had never belonged to 4-H. The percent that had never been in 4-H ranged from 77% of the eighth graders in the South to 91% in the Northeast.

Percentage Point Difference (PPD) in 4-H Participation According to Region

	PPD
Northeast: joiners, 2% to 91% nevers	89
North Central; joiners, 2% to 82% nevers	80
South: joiners, 3% to 72% nevers	69
West: joiners, 3% to 89% nevers	86

APPENDIX B
RECIPIENTS OF CONCEPT REPORTS

Letters were sent to State Extension Leaders of Family Living and 4-H Programs offering them the opportunity to put state staff, agents and volunteers on the mailing list. Wisconsin opted to announce the reports in statewide mailings leaving it to agents to indicate that they wanted to receive them. Present and previous advisory groups were also included.

LAUREL E DEAN	UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA	CA
VIRGINIA NORMAN	ARLETA	CA
KAREN PITTMAN	ACADEMY FOR EDUCATIONAL DVLPMNT	DC
STEVE MULLEN	USDA	DC
JOEL SOOBITSKY	USDA	DC
GEORGE MAYESKE	USDA	DC
SUE FISHER	GAINESVILLE	FL
MABEL SAKUMA	EXTENSION AGENT, KAHULUI	HI
ANN FONTEX	EXTENSION AGENT, KAUNAKAKAI	HI
CLAIRE NAKATSUKA	EXTENSION AGENT, HONOLULU	HI
MARYKNOLL SPOTKAEFF	EXTENSION AGENT WAIANAE	HI
SHARON QUERY	STATE YOUTH DEV SPECIALIST	IA
SHEILAH MANLEY	COUNTY 4-H AND YOUTH LEADER	IA
CAROL H EHLERS	IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY	IA
PATRICIA HENDRICKS	UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO	ID
ARLINDA NAUMAN	UNIVERSITY OF IDAHO	ID
JIM WILSON	KOOTENAI CO EXT AG AGENT	ID
LINDA WEBB	DONNELLY	ID
SANDRA BIDNER	CARLOCK	IL
MARY PILAT	4-H DEPT	IN
TOM WEESNER	ZIONSVILLE	IN
ALBERT E BEATON	BOSTON COLLEGE	MA
JEFF MILLER	NATIONAL 4-H COUNCIL	MD
LESTER SCHICK	MUSKEGON	MI
JAN B BARKER	KALAMAZOO	MI
CHRISTINE NELSON	MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY	MI
LESTER SCHICK	MUSKEGON	MI
VIRGINIA SHAIN	4-H YOUTH DEV SPECIALIST	MO
INA LYNN MCCLAIN	MISSOURI	MO
CANDACE GOOD	NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIV	NC
CYNDI CONN	CLAY COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE	NE
LORI MARTIN	DOUGLAS COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE	NE
LINDA BOECKNER	UNIV OF NEB PANHANDLE REC	NE
VICKI GENOFF	UNIV OF NEBRASKA-NORTHEAST REC	NE
KEITH MARTIKAINEN	UNIV OF NEBRASKA-SO CENTRAL REC	NE
MR BENJAMIN P DAVIS	UNH COOPERATIVE EXTENSION	NH
T. G. SCHAAL	CAMDEN MIDDLE SCHOOL	NY
STEVE JOSEPH	COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT 4-H	OH
KATHRYN BECKHAM	EXTN FAMILY LIFE SPECIALIST	OH
KEN LAFONTANE	COUNTY EXTENSION AGENT 4-H	OH
RICHARD W CLARK	OHIO COOP EXTN SERVICE	OH
BRENDA YOUNG	COUNTY EXTENSION AGEMT	OH
EMMALOU NORLAND	THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY	OH
JIM RUTLEDGE	ASST DIRECTOR 4-H PROGRAMS	OK
ELAINE WILSON	EXTENSION PARENTING SPECIALIST	OK
SHEILA FORBES	EXTENSION PROGRAM SPECIALIST 4-H	OK
KEVIN HACKET	DISTRICT 4-H PROGRAM SPECIALIST	OK
ROY HAMILTON	LA GRANDE	OR
LILLIAN LARWOOD	EUGENE	OR

ANNE L HEINSOHN	THE PENN STATE UNIVERSITY	PA
DENO DECIANTIS	ALLEGYENY COUNTY COOP EXTENSION	PA
TIMOTHY ROLLINS	THE PENN STATE UNIVERSITY	PA
KATHERINE FENNELLY	PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY	PA
KATHRYN PENROD	BROOKINGS	SD
MARY RIDGEWAY	PARIS	TN
CAROL EDWARDS	GOODLETTSVILLE	TN
TERESA GODDARD	TENNESSEE 4-H CLUB FOUNDATION	TN
CATHERINE LAKE	CENTERVILLE	TN
DANNY BULLINGTON	KNOXVILLE	TN
SUDIE ALSTON	MEMPHIS	TN
REBECCA MURRAY	DANDRIDGE	TN
JANET YEATES	TEXAS AG EXTN SERVICE	TX
DOUG SHORES	HARRIS COUNTY EXTN AGENT 4-H	TX
SARAH ANDERSON	COLLEGE STATION	TX
STEVE SMALL	UNIV OF WISCONSIN	WI
KAREN P BOGENSCHNEIDER	UNIV OF WISCONSIN	WI
TRISHA DAY	UNIV OF WISCONSIN	WI
LINDA KUSTKA	UNIV OF WISCONSIN	WI
KATHI VOSS	UNIV OF WISCONSIN	WI
STEVE KINZEL	UNIV OF WISCONSIN	WI
ROBERT O RAY	UNIV OF WISCONSIN	WI
WENDY WAY	UNIV OF WISCONSIN	WI
KIMBERLY REAMAN	4-H YOUTH AGENT WAUPACA CO	WI
KAY COWING	4-H YOUTH AGENT DANE CO	WI
PEGGY NORDGREN	TAYLOR COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
CAROLYN M KRUEGER	BAYFIELD COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
SHELBY MAIER	WALWORTH COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
PEG THOMAS	DANE COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
LUANNE NEUMANN	CRAWFORD COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
JAN CISMOSKI	WOOD COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
PAM JANGOR	ASHLAND COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
SUSAN K FUTTERER	LINCOLN COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
JOAN E LEFBVRE	AREA EXTENSION EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
MARY DIKKEBOOM	ROCK COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
DONNA DOLL-YOGERST	OCONTO COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
CHRIS KNIEP	WINNEBAGO COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
TARAH THOMAS	LANGLADE COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
KIMBERLY GREDER	RACINE COUNTY HOME ECONOMIST	WI
EDIE FELTS-GRABARSKI	ADAMS COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
JUDITH A KNUDSEN	BROWN COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
LINDA BOELTER	ONEIDA COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
FADEN FULLEYLOVE-KRAUSE	CALUMET COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI
DONNA ROSENKRANY	MARQUETTE COUNTY EXTN HOME ECONOMIST	WI